

# ESSAYS BY DIVERS HANDS

BEING THE

## TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

## ROYAL SOCIETY OF LITERATURE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

NEW SERIES

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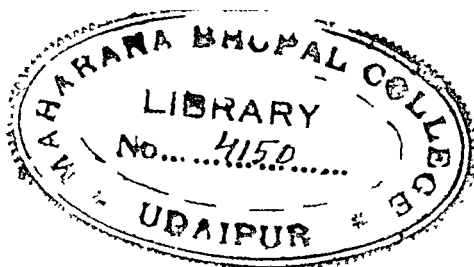
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## IN MEMORIAM.

WHILST this volume was in the Press, the world of letters sustained a painful loss by the sudden death of the author of the first essay, Mr. Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, a most distinguished Fellow of this Royal Society.

His many friends will lament the demise of a fascinating and sympathetic personality ; literature at large will be the poorer for the disappearance of a singularly versatile. pure and lucid writer.

As a perfect master of the form of dialogue, it is a coincidence, to call it by no other name, that his last printed effort should be an exposition of his views upon that particular phase of literary composition in which he so pre-eminently excelled.

THE EDITOR.

# INTRODUCTION.

BY THE EDITOR.

IN the present times, when all of us, young and old alike, perforce acknowledge the truth of the lines :

“Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change,”

it is interesting to one who for more than half a century has been a Fellow of this Royal Society of Literature to observe the continuity which exists in such a body, notwithstanding the inevitable variations which must occur in its structure.

A collection of men devoted to literature, which at its initiation included Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Roscoe, T. R. Malthus and Sharon Turner, the historian, which bestowed its first Gold Medals upon Sir Walter Scott, Robert Southey, Washington Irving and Henry Hallam, still runs true to the original scale when, more than a century after its inception, it numbers such men of note as Edmund Gosse, Henry Newbolt, Walter de la Mare, John Masefield and John Drinkwater, while its scroll of medallists is enriched by the inclusion of Thomas Hardy and Rudyard Kipling.

Moreover, though doubtless greatly changed in form and expression, the literary output of the Society is in no way unworthy of comparison with the efforts of its original members.

A few years ago a critic in 'The Times Literary Supplement,' referring to a recently issued volume of 'Transactions,' declares: "This volume proves once again what a wide net the Council of the Royal Society of Literature casts in search of scholars and writers to address them. We have here papers on such diverse subjects as the reign of Queen Anne, the tendencies of Modern English Poetry, and Yiddish Literature in the Middle Ages."

The gamut of the present volume is perhaps not quite so unrestricted as the above, but it must be acknowledged that essays on such subjects as Dialogue as a Literary Form, Oscar Wilde, and the Sculptures of the Parthenon form a collection of literary matter, not only most interesting in itself, but which, to sympathetic minds, may even be found to be subtly connected in its various parts. Also the London Coffee Houses—those incubators from which emanated so much of that incalculable force, public opinion—and an account of old English and Scottish popular ballads—that special form of national craving after idealism which man's instinctive love of rhythm inspired—are not unbecomingly linked with a comparison of the idiosyncrasies of three famous Princesses.

In the present day, when old forms are derided, when restraint in expression and harmony of line are rejected as the fetters of an extinct age, it is both agreeable and valuable to find a writer of the distinction of Mr. Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson—since, alas, suddenly taken from us—contributing a powerful argument in favour of the retention of the dialogue form of instruction, now reputed unpopular with the present generation, but which constituted a method

favoured by Socrates and Plato, who preferred the medium of conversation to that of a written treatise.

The essayist urges: "Dialogue is argument and discussion purged of its chaos and its intemperance. A good dialogue therefore will preserve the manner of conversation and also its dramatic qualities." Holding these opinions it is only logical that the writer should proclaim Mr. George Bernard Shaw to be the modern equivalent to Socrates, using the stage as the Greek philosopher used the market-place or the gymnasium.

Perhaps the comparison may nowadays be even more cogent, since the author of 'The Apple Cart' has availed himself of the opportunity of addressing the denizens of an almost world-wide market-place through the medium of the wireless broadcasting. Here truly a comparison can be made between Socrates, dilating to an Athenian crowd on the theme of a Republic, "that form of government which is not only just and good, but composed of absolute justice and goodness," and Mr. Shaw delightfully discoursing about Democracy, which he describes as sometimes "furiously violent and always dangerous and treacherous. Our business is not to deny the perils of Democracy, but to provide against them as far as we can, and then consider whether the risks we cannot provide against are worth taking."

Truly, notwithstanding the affectionate admiration the modern Socrates excites among his followers, occasionally his outpourings corroborate the truth of Mr. Dickinson's peroration: "There is every kind of man. Some are pure artists and hate the impurity of mixed forms. I am a mixed character myself and

like mixed form. and if anyone retorts that the mixed is also the confused, I should not deny it. I don't see how anyone can help being confused in a universe like this."

A volume of essays such as these must of necessity be a fortuitous collection of literary atoms. No attempt has been or can be made to ensure continuity; it therefore is a curious coincidence that in Mr. Patrick Braybrooke's contribution, "Oscar Wilde: a Consideration." we find the expression, "the form of dialectic based on the Platonian duologues is admirably suited to the interpretation of part of Wilde's philosophy."

Truly much of that written by Mr. Lowes Dickinson concerning the value and the drawbacks of the dialogue form. which "imposes the judgment of the author behind a screen of splendid rhetoric," instead of a clear discussion by means of close argument, finds a very apposite example in many of the expressions of that meteoric tragedy, Oscar Wilde.

There was but little of the true Platonic search for wisdom in that aphorism of Wilde that "the only way to beat a temptation is to give way to it"—an assertion which displays Wilde's inveterate habit of preferring verbal scintillation to ethical verity. Indeed, even Mr. Braybrooke's devotion to the subject of his consideration cannot disguise the fact that much of the glitter of Wilde's wit was tinsel and not true gold. None could meet and see Wilde, as occasionally I did, without answering in the affirmative the question put by the writer of this essay at the commencement, Was Wilde, in all his moods, merely an actor, a *poseur*? "In all his moods"

covers a wide field, but it may not unfairly be observed that the dominant desire of Wilde's nature was to excite popular attention.

The tragic termination of a career which, opening with every advantage, bringing wealth, fame and almost undue adulation, then suddenly ending in disgrace, exile and death has, by the pity of it, added a glamour to the memory of one who, though brilliantly gifted, yet obviously lacked the one quality of sincerity without which no writer can achieve real greatness.

Much of what Wilde wrote and said on the face of it lacked veracity. It cannot be supposed that he ever sincerely believed that "nothing is more evident than that Nature hates Mind."

The reverse truly may be said of some pure souls whose spirit feels small affection for the often loathly integument into which it has been thrust, but this remark of Wilde, and some others of a like character, may be taken as evidence of the essentially sensual nature of much of his imaginings.

Undoubtedly he was witty. Perhaps his best *jeu d'esprit* is the satirical query quoted by Mr. Braybrooke, "I wonder if it was the fogs which made the English people or the English people who produced the fogs." Here there is a touch of almost Voltairian mordacity, but much of his sarcasm was only the smart sayings of a society *flâneur*, and the lapse of thirty years, during which Mayfair has become commercialized, deprives such gibes as "Lady Bracknell cannot understand how people can live on the wrong side of Belgrave Square" not only of their piquancy, but almost of their point.



Yet with all depreciation, enough real metal existed in this ill-starred genius to justify the wonder that after only thirty years so little interest should be taken in his work. As in many another case perchance Time may do true justice and, by winnowing the dust and the chaff from the true grain, leave English literature richer by some recognized treasures.

Mr. Courtenay Pollock begins his essay on "Lord Elgin and the Marbles" with a sentence which unconsciously provides a connection between his work and the contents of the two papers which have preceded it: "The affinity between literature and the other arts and sciences is so clear and the mental qualities which develop variously in individuals are so often identical that we may say, after all Chance alone decides upon what highway genius will set out."

This interesting account of the acquisition of the Elgin Marbles, as the fragments of the Parthenon acquired by Lord Elgin used always to be called, is a timely reminder that, thanks to the acquisitive instincts of the British race, a priceless treasure was preserved from destruction and decay. Mr. Pollock exemplifies his own dictum that literature is a good companion to other pursuits, by writing a most valuable description of the political and military condition of that portion of the now called Middle East, which constituted the Turkish Empire during the last years of the dying eighteenth and the first decade of the nascent nineteenth centuries.

The defeat of the Turks by Napoleon, the frustration of the French designs in Egypt and Turkey by Nelson and Abercrombie afforded to the British

Ambassador at the Court of the Sultan, the Earl of Elgin, an opportunity of acquiring the scattered remains of the Parthenon, which lay abandoned upon the rocky crest of the Acropolis at Athens among derelict fortifications and sordid dwellings: as Mr. Pollock says, "The most perfect, the most impressive and refined example of Greek architecture, the finest product of intellect and artistry the world possesses."

Oscar Wilde in a foolish rhapsody is reported to have said, "What do we owe to Greece?" The answer is given by Mr. Pollock in the following sentence: "The influence radiated by the Parthenon sculptures was immediate and proved lasting. Chiefly to them, I think, is traceable that strain of classicism which has marked our literature and art since 1807."

Whether this pseudo-classicism did much good to art as a whole is to be doubted. The unreal, uninspired yards of canvas painted by David which appeared in the French Exhibition might well prompt this question, and the weaker copies of the same school which are extant emphasize the doubt, but that the pure beauty of the Greek marbles helped to restrain the spirit of coarseness engendered by the long war may not only be admitted, but may even induce a desire that some similar discovery could be made to help us to avoid and avert the evils which to-day threaten our literature and our art. It would indeed be a priceless boon if a renewed craving for old marble relieved us from the synthetic vulgarity of modern reinforced concrete and the architectural abortions which defile the metropolis, while truly every lover of literature, on both sides of the Atlantic, would welcome any revival of literary purity which

might free the beautiful English language from the verbal scum of Hollywood.

The manner of the acquisition of these Elgin marbles drew down some opprobrium upon the noble author of the seizure. At first Lord Elgin only proposed to have drawings and plaster casts made of the fragments, but the Chaplain of the Embassy, Dr. Phillip Hunt, desiring probably the artistic salvation of his countrymen, urged the transportation of all the stones bearing inscriptions. This was effected, and the Italian artist, Battista Lusieri, to whom was entrusted the removal of the fragments, in despair at the mutilated condition of some of the remains, suggested that Canova should be consulted as to their restoration. Canova, to his honour, refused to participate in such "sacrilege," and Byron, to his own great content, poetically anathematized the diplomatist who rescued the treasures from inevitable destruction.

The introduction of coffee into England and the creation by its importation of the places where it could be consumed, thus founding a system which so radiated throughout society as to materially affect that uncontrollable body, public opinion, has afforded Mr. Warren Dawson an opportunity of which he has taken admirable advantage.

It is a curious fact that the era of the Restoration, which bears a bad repute for excesses of all kinds, should have been the period in which the two non-alcoholic drinks which have contributed so greatly to the spread of temperance made their first appearance in this country. On May 22nd, 1662, Charles II married Donna Catarina de Braganza, sister of

Alfonzo, King of Portugal, a lady of no pronounced beauty, but promised a dowry which, on paper, appeared to be most attractive. A sum of £800,000, the cession of Tangier, which commanded the Mediterranean, and of Bombay, which controlled the Indian trade, were advantages which no nation need despise. None of these acquisitions, except the last, long remained to the British people, but as Waller, the poet, in true courtier-like spirit, sang :

“ The best of Queens and best of herbs we owe  
To that brave nation who the way doth show ” —

in this instance apparently to the use of tea, which has now become one of our indispensable needs.

Coffee came later. In 1652 an English Turkey merchant brought over a Greek servant who knew how to roast and brew the berry. A handbill issued by this person reads as follows :

“ The vertue of this Coffee drink first publickly made and sold in England by Pasqua Rossee in St. Martin’s Alley, Cornhill, at the sign of his own head.”

Mr. Dawson in his paper draws attention to an earlier instance, where John Evelyn drank coffee at Oxford at the house of a Greek named Canopus. Evidently the habit became prevalent about this time, and later spread very widely in London.

The coffee-house, like the tavern in earlier times, was the centre of gossip and political disputation. Perhaps this fact increased the popularity of the fragrant berry, for at the time of their introduction, neither tea nor coffee obtained much favour among the people at large.

Tea was frequently called “ hay water,” and a

poem published in 1663, while expressing great wonder at the odd taste which could make coffee a substitute for "rich Canary," describes it as a jest that—

" . . . gives ye for the vine's pure blood,  
A loathsome potion. not yet understood,  
Syrup of soot or essence of old shoes,  
Dashed with diurnals and the book of news."

A singularly interesting account in Mr. Dawson's essay deals with the establishment of Lloyd's coffee-house, now that great institution "Lloyd's," which has become so great a factor of our commercial life.

Alexander Fletcher, of Saltoun, a Scottish republican, "brave as the sword he wore," in December, 1703, wrote a letter in which occur the words, wrongly attributed by Lord Brougham to the great Lord Chatham: "I knew a very wise man that believed that if a man were permitted to make all the ballads he need not care who should make the laws of a nation."

Mr. Gregory, in his paper on Old English and Scottish popular ballads, makes the true remark that some of the old ballads sprang direct from the people, and that the rude Border men delighted in the songs which they themselves composed about their own deeds and the feats of their forbears.

This undoubtedly is true. The innate craving for the ideal which always is conceived in the human heart, in early and unsophisticated days became allied to that love of rhythm which every uncivilized nation spontaneously develops; thus the wandering minstrel, hearing the legend, instinctively worked it into the

rhythmic form of a ballad, and in that shape it has come down to us through the ages. Although Mr. Gregory wisely declares that the subject he has chosen is too gigantic to be dealt with in one short paper, yet he has given his reader a very interesting synopsis of those outpourings of national spirit which in this present sophisticated age may well afford us a lesson in simplicity and strength.

With regard to the last contribution to this volume, that from my own pen, bearing in mind Disraeli's dictum that an author who speaks about his books is almost as great a nuisance as a mother who talks about her children, I will only give the reasons for its inception. for these, as a fact, cover all its intention and meaning.

Lately I had occasion to refer to some notes I previously made concerning the correspondence of a very remarkable woman, the founder. be it understood. of the dynasty which now rules over this Empire to its inestimable advantage, the Electress Sophia of Hanover.

At exactly the same time I received the gift of Mr. Lytton Strachey's fascinating volume on Queen Elizabeth and Essex. Before such intellectual material could be wholesomely absorbed, Messrs. Murray sent me the advertisement of the 'Letters of Queen Victoria.'

The "diversity of gifts but the same spirit" which possessed these three distinguished women so impressed me that, at once, I began to write the paper which now concludes this volume.

As aforesaid. 'Transactions' such as these must, of necessity, be a fortuitous collection of literary items.

With wise discretion the authorities of this Royal Society designed that the present volume should be edited by the wielder of an illustrious pen. Mr. John Buchan. Weight of work compelled him to ask for relief from this task. In default I was pressed into his place. With no mock modesty I may say that none regret the substitution of Editor more than I do myself, for I know that the author of 'Green-mantle' would have evolved from this very pregnant collection of essays an introduction which would not only have pointed the moral, but would also much have adorned the tale.

## DIALOGUE AS A LITERARY FORM.

BY GOLDSWORTHY LOWES DICKINSON, F.R.S.L.

[Read February 17th, 1932.]

I READ lately, in a book review, that modern men, or at any rate the modern young, do not like the dialogue form. I do not know whether that is generally true, but it interested me, since I have written dialogues, and set me thinking about the merits and difficulties of the form. This paper is the result of my meditations.

All dialogues that have been preserved were, of course, written, but the origin of the form was conversation. In the west it sprang from the conversation of Socrates, and he, it is interesting to learn from Plato, had an aversion from written treatises. The reasons, we are told, were as follows :

“For this, I conceive, Phædrus, is the evil of writing, and herein it closely resembles painting. The creatures of the latter art stand before you as if they were alive, but if you ask them a question, they look very solemn and say not a word. And so it is with written discourses. You could fancy they speak as though they were possessed of sense, but if you wish to understand something they say, and question them about it, you find them ever repeating but one and the self-same story. Moreover, every discourse, once written, is tossed about from hand to hand, equally among those who understand it, and those for whom it is in nowise fitted ; and it does not know to whom it ought, and to whom



it ought not, to speak. And when misunderstood and unjustly attacked, it always needs its father to help it, for, unaided, it can neither retaliate, nor defend itself.

There is much truth in this criticism, and we may pause for a moment to inquire how much. The answer, I think, depends on the subject-matter treated. There was not, when Socrates was talking, very much of what we call exact science. Books were mostly either poetical speculations about nature, or discussions and instructions about the conduct of life. We, on the other hand, have an immense mass of knowledge about nature which can be handed on didactically to students, and for conveying this the dialogue is not a proper form. No doubt the foundations of any science are open to much debate, and possibly the debate might be properly conducted in dialogue. But the mass of verifiable knowledge (facts as such) is better set forth either by text-book or lecture or instruction and demonstration in laboratories. The Greeks of the fifth century had no laboratories and little, if any, experiment. They had, indeed, mathematics, which is the purest of the sciences; but it never occurred to them, so far as I know, to write dialogues about that. For mathematical arguments are the very type of demonstration. There is no room for difference of opinion, and therefore no room for discussion. And what is true of mathematics is true, to a less degree, of all knowledge that has reached the stage of science.

Broadly that class of subject-matter is unsuited to dialogue. But there remains a large field of human thinking and feeling, and that of the utmost importance. It includes everything which involves ideas

of goodness and badness—what are now called values—whether they be ethical or æsthetic or religious. In this immense region demonstration seems to be impossible. There is agreement or disagreement, partial or total; and that may, and often does, provoke passion, indignation, even fury. Consider, for example, the reaction of most men's minds to such words as "pacifist" or "communist" or "atheist"; and, though in a less degree, to the most modern painting or sculpture. You must have observed (and I think the fact is rather significant) that few people are content to say simply "I don't understand art," or "I don't care about it." They lash themselves into a rage over it, and want to have their money returned at the door if they are confronted by pictures that contradict the convention to which they happen to have got accustomed. Now the implication of this passion is, I think, that most people believe that there is a "right" and a "wrong" even in art, and certainly in ethics. For the easy way out, sometimes adopted, that one opinion is as good as another, is contradicted by actual behaviour, as soon as any occasion felt to be important arises.

On the other hand, if there is a right and a wrong, it is not self-evident who knows it. Much of the disputation, it is true, may be due to ignorance or misapprehension of facts. But behind and beyond that are real differences of valuation, and controversy may, or might, be reduced to such differences. For instance, when it comes to the point, are you going to vote for measures that will make the rich pay to improve the lot of the poor, assuming that the lot of the poor will really be improved; or do you care

more about the power and greatness of your country than about the peace of the world? And so on.

We believe, then, that in this region there is right and wrong, though we dispute about what it is. Most of us believe also that there are some men who know, or have known, better than others. Such are the founders of religion, like Jesus, or Mahommed or Buddha; and, in ethics, certain great names, such as Socrates or Confucius; or even in æsthetics, let us say, Ruskin, or Mr. Roger Fry.

These facts show how important men feel these questions of value to be, and also how little they are inclined to apply to them the cold and detached methods of science. We must add, however, that the reason of this passion is not merely, or perhaps mainly, man's concern with the truth. Interest also comes in. The most common attitude is that we advance principles which look objective, and which we persuade ourselves are so, while in fact we are being determined very largely by something else. The greater part of our morality is thus mixed. That is why all of us can always accuse other people of hypocrisy with a certain amount of truth.

Well—it is all this region that is suitable to the dialogue form. For dialogue is argument and discussion purged of its chaos and its intemperance. A good dialogue will therefore preserve the manner of conversation and also its dramatic qualities. In our time indeed, our most prominent dramatist, Mr. Bernard Shaw, uses the stage as Socrates used the market-place or the gymnasium. Whether his dramas as such suffer by that method is another question, into which I shall not enter here. I refer

to him only as illustrating the enduring fascination of dialogue if it is handled effectively; for large audiences, in fact, are spellbound by Mr. Shaw's discussions, even when they arrest the action of his play. He is, in fact, the best modern parallel to Socrates, in method if not in matter or opinion.

The conversations of Socrates are known to us only in the representations of them given by Plato and Xenophon. Xenophon's is the pedestrian, Plato's the dramatic and poetical record. I will not pause to consider the debatable and debated question which is more like the original. I incline, myself, to Plato. At any rate, it is he who gives the scene and the atmosphere with the greater vividness. And the scene in ancient Athens was peculiarly favourable; for life was lived much out of doors; there was a large society of people who knew, or knew about, one another and one another's relations; and the population, or some part of it, was perhaps the most quick-witted that has ever been gathered together. Plato had therefore a unique opportunity for the setting of his work. In illustration, let me give a passage from one of the earlier Platonic dialogues:

On entering we found that the boys had finished their sacrifices, and the ceremony being now pretty well over, were playing together at knuckle-bones, all in their holiday-dress. The greater part were carrying on their game in the court outside, but some of them were in a corner of the undressing-room, playing at odd and even with a number of bones which they drew out of small baskets. Round these were stationed others looking on, among whom was Lysis; and he stood in the midst of boys and youths with a chaplet on his head, unmatched in face or form. You would say he was not beautiful merely, but even of a noble mien. For ourselves,

A Scene  
Gymnas

we withdrew to the opposite part of the room, and sitting down, as nothing was going on there, began to talk. While thus engaged, Lysis kept turning round and eyeing us, evidently wishing to join us. For some time though he remained in doubt, not liking to walk up alone. But when Menexenus looked in from his game in the court, and on seeing Ctesippus and me came to sit down with us, Lysis also followed at sight of his friend, and took a seat by his side. Then the others came up too, and among them Hippothales; who, seeing them form into a good-sized group, screened himself behind them in a position where he did not think he could be seen by Lysis: so fearful was he of giving him offence. And thus placed near him, he listened to our conversation.

There is perhaps no one who has given the background so exquisitely as Plato, but Berkeley runs him close. Take for example the following:

Next morning Euphranor rose early and spent the forenoon in ordering his affairs. After dinner we took our walk to Crito's, which lay through half-a-dozen pleasant fields planted round with plane trees that are very common in this part of the country. We walked under the delicious shade of these trees for about half an hour before we came to Crito's house, which stands in the middle of a small park, beautified with two fine groves of oak and walnut, and a winding stream of sweet and clear water. We met a servant at the door with a small basket of fruit, which he was carrying into a grove, where he said his master was with two strangers. We found them all three sitting under a shade. And after the usual forms at first meeting, Euphranor and I sat down by them.\*

Many other examples might be given, such as the opening and the close of Dryden's essay on dramatic

\* 'Alcephron,' vol ii, p 162 Works: Böhn's edition, 1898, vol. ii.

poetry. The background, in short, is an admirable if not essential device for enlisting at the outset the interest and sympathy of the reader.

Still more important is the characterization of the speakers. In the best Platonic dialogues Socrates himself, the known and loved master, is the centre of interest. His personality is the main source of the undying popularity of much of Plato's work. He has survived all changes of time and language and intellectual climate. "Age cannot wither him nor custom stale his infinite variety." And he is only one of a whole gallery of portraits—Protagoras, Gorgias, Theætetus, Phædrus, Alcibiades. I do not remember any other example of characterization so complete, except in Diderot, whose *Neveu de Rameau* is as living as any character in drama. Landor seems to me in this respect less satisfactory. The perfection of his style shines with an equally clear and cold light upon all his personages; but though they are clearly enough conceived, they do not somehow live. That, however, is an opinion which not everyone may share, and I do not advance it too dogmatically.

Good dialogue, then, has a strong dramatic element. But just here a difficulty arises. For even where that element is most effective, it is difficult to sustain throughout a long and complicated argument. Much, no doubt, depends here upon the subject-matter. Nothing, for instance, could be more sparkling throughout than the dialogues of Lucian. The same may be said of Diderot in his '*Entretien d'un philosophe avec la Maréchale*.' But commonly dialogue has been used for a more definitely intellectual purpose. Plato more than anyone else has been the

model, and Plato's object was to clarify other people's ideas on ethics and politics, and to expound his own. Now when that is the purpose, an incompatibility is soon felt between the drama and the subject-matter of the dialogue.

Thus, most readers, I think, must have felt in reading Plato at certain points, a sense of weariness and irritability supervening upon their delight. The dialectic sometimes seems trivial or unfair, or the problems too difficult to be suited to that form of discussion. Plato, it is true, had extraordinary resources to meet this difficulty. He lightens the strain by beautiful, amusing or dramatic passages and digressions as in the *Theætetus*; or again, if he has to expand a difficult conception, he takes refuge in allegory or myth—a procedure made easier for him than it is for a modern writer, because he belonged to the race which has created the most beautiful and plastic mythology known to history. Thus, he could build upon legends already familiar to his readers. Take, for example, the famous allegory of the cave in the *Republic*. Plato is there endeavouring to make clear a fundamental point in his theory of ideas. He has stated his doctrine in abstract and logical form; he now turns to make it clear and more vivid by allegory; and I believe that most readers still feel the thrill of his conception, because of the vivid imagery in which it is enshrined. I can only quote in part:

“Picture men in an underground cave-dwelling, with a long entrance reaching up towards the light along the whole width of the cave; in this they lie from their childhood, their legs and necks in chains, so that they stay where they are and

look only in front of them, as the chain prevents them turning their heads round. Some way off, and higher up, a fire is burning behind them, and between the fire and the prisoners is a road on higher ground. Imagine a wall built along this road, like the screens which showmen have in front of the audience, over which they show the puppets. Then picture also men carrying along this wall all kinds of articles which overtop it, statues of men and other creatures in stone and wood and other materials; naturally some of the carriers are speaking, others are silent.

"These men," he continues, "can see nothing but the shadows of objects carried along the wall and will suppose these to be the only reality." Further, he imagines an echo reverberating back from the wall opposite the prisoners, so that any words spoken by the carriers will seem to them to proceed from the shadows at which they are looking. Now let us suppose one of them released from his bonds, and not only enabled, but compelled to turn his head and look up towards the light. He will be blinded and confused and both unwilling and unable to believe that what he is now looking at is more real than what he had considered to be reality before.

Suppose him, however, to be dragged out of the cave altogether into the outside world. He still would not see distinctly.

"At first he would most easily see shadows, then the reflections in water of men and everything else, and, finally, the things themselves. After that he would look at the heavenly bodies and the sky itself by night, turning his eyes to the light of the stars and the moon more easily than to the sun or to the sun's light by day."

"Surely."

"Then, last of all, I fancy, he would be able to look at the sun and observe its nature, not its appearances in water or in alien material, but the very sun itself in its own place."

"Inevitably," he said.

"And that done, he would then come to infer concerning it that it is the sun which produces the seasons and years, and controls everything in the sphere of the visible, and is in a



manner the author of all those things which he and his fellow-prisoners used to see."

"It is clear that this will be his next conclusion," he said.

"Well, then, if he is reminded of his original abode and its wisdom, and those who were then his fellow-prisoners, do you not think that he will pity them and count himself happy in the change?"

"Certainly."

"Now suppose that those prisoners had had among themselves a system of honours and commendations, that prizes were granted to the man who had the keenest eye for passing objects and the best memory for which usually came first, and which second, and which came together, and who could most cleverly conjecture from this what was likely to come in the future, do you think that our friend would think longingly of those prizes and envy the men whom the prisoners honour and set in authority? Would he not rather feel what Homer describes, and wish earnestly

‘To live on earth a swain,  
Or serve a swain for hire.’

or suffer anything rather than be so the victim of seeming and live in their way?"

"Yes," he said, "I certainly think that he would endure anything rather than that."

"Then consider this point," I said. "If this man were to descend again and take his seat in his old place, would not his eyes be full of darkness because he had just come out of the sunlight?"

"Most certainly," he said.

"And suppose that he had again to take part with the prisoners there in the old contest of distinguishing between the shadows, while his sight was confused and before his eyes had got steady (and it might take them quite a considerable time to get used to the darkness), would not men laugh at him, and say that having gone up above he had come back with his sight ruined, so that it was not worth while even to try to go up? And do you not think that they would kill

him who tried to release them and bear them up, if they could lay hands on him, and slay him ? ”

“ Certainly,” he said.

“ Now this simile, my dear Glaucon, must be applied in all its parts to what we said before ; the sphere revealed by sight being compared to the prison dwelling, and the light of the fire therein to the power of the sun. If you will set the upward ascent and the seeing of the things in the upper world with the upward journey of the soul to the intelligible sphere, you will have my surmise ; and that is what you are anxious to have. Whether it be actually true. God knows. But this is how it appears to me. In the world of knowledge the Form of the good is perceived last and with difficulty, but when it is seen it must be inferred that it is the cause of all that is right and beautiful in all things, producing in the visible world light and the lord of light, and being itself lord in the intelligible world and the giver of truth and reason, and this Form of the good must be seen by whosoever would act wisely in public or in private.”

Some of you, I think, will agree with me about the moving quality of this passage. Plato's philosophy at this point takes wings and flies ; but it flies into a clear heaven, not, as so often happens with poetical thinkers, into mist and cloud. It should not, I think, properly be called mystical. For Plato bases himself on facts and logic, and finds these pointing away into something which lies beyond and behind, and which is the “ real ” world of which the prisoners in the cave saw only the shadows. This real world, in Plato's philosophy, is intimately bound up with love ; and it is in his dealing with love that we find his most inspired passages. I will venture to quote from the myth of the ‘ Symposium,’ as translated by the poet Shelley, who had a natural sympathy with Plato which gives a peculiar swing and beauty to his

rendering. In this myth also you will note how useful to Plato was the popular mythology :

The Birth of  
Love

On the birth of Venus the Gods celebrated a great feast, and among them came Plenty, the son of Metis. After supper, Poverty, observing the profusion, came to beg, and stood beside the door. Plenty being drunk with nectar, for wine was not yet invented, went out into Jupiter's garden, and fell into a deep sleep. Poverty wishing to have a child by Plenty, on account of her low estate, lay down by him, and from his embraces conceived Love. Love is, therefore, the follower and servant of Venus because he was conceived at her birth, and because by nature he is a lover of all that is beautiful, and Venus was beautiful. And since Love is the child of Poverty and Plenty, his nature and fortune participate in that of his parents. He is for ever poor, and so far from being delicate and beautiful, as mankind imagine, he is squalid and withered ; he flies low along the ground, and is homeless and unsandalled : he sleeps without covering before the doors, and in the unsheltered streets : possessing thus far his mother's nature, that he is ever the companion of want. But, inasmuch as he participates in that of his father, he is for ever scheming to obtain things which are good and beautiful ; he is fearless, vehement, and strong : a dreadful hunter, for ever weaving some new contrivance : exceedingly cautious and prudent, and full of resources : he is also, during his whole existence, a philosopher, a powerful enchanter, a wizard, and a subtle sophist. And, as his nature is neither mortal nor immortal, on the same day when he is fortunate and successful, he will at one time flourish, and then die away, and then, according to his father's nature, again revive. All that he acquires perpetually flows away from him, so that Love is never either rich or poor, and holding for ever an intermediate state between ignorance and wisdom.

Love is for  
the Posses-  
sion of  
Eternal  
Good .

Now the gods do not seek wisdom or anything else, because they already possess it. Nor do the ignorant, for they do not feel the urge. Those who seek are the philosophers in the proper sense, that is, the lovers of wisdom. Now what

men love is always what is Good and this Good they desire to possess eternally. So that love may be described as love of the possession of Good for ever.

How does this love express itself? In the desire to generate what is beautiful whether in the body or the soul. "The bodies and souls of all human beings are alike pregnant with their future progeny, and when we arrive at a certain age our nature impels us to bring forth and propagate." This immortality is sought in different ways. The simplest way, that which all animals pursue, is the reproduction of the species. That, of course, is one of the main purposes of men, but they also pursue other forms of love. One, for example, is the love of fame :

"Observe with how vehement a desire they are affected to become illustrious and to prolong their glory into immortal time, to attain which object, far more ardently than for the sake of their children, all men are ready to engage in many dangers, and expend their fortunes, and submit to any labours and incur any death. Do you believe that Alcestis would have died in the place of Admetus, or Achilles for the revenge of Patroclus, or Codrus for the kingdom of his posterity, if they had not believed that the immortal memory of their actions, which we now cherish, would have remained after their death? Far otherwise; all such deeds are done for the sake of ever-living virtue, and this immortal glory which they have obtained; and inasmuch as any one is of an excellent nature, so much the more is he impelled to attain this reward. For they love what is immortal."

The Rising  
Scale of  
Love.

Another love is the love of art. Another that of the right government of families and states.

"Whosoever from his youth feels his soul pregnant with the conception of these excellences, is divine: and when due time arrives, desires to bring forth; and wandering about, he seeks the beautiful in which he may propagate what he has conceived; for there is no generation in that which is deformed; he embraces those bodies which are beautiful rather than those which are deformed, in obedience to the principle which is within him, which is ever seeking to perpetuate

Generation  
out of Beauty  
and Good-  
ness

itself. And if he meets, in conjunction with loveliness of form, a beautiful, generous, and gentle soul, he embraces both at once, and immediately undertakes to educate this object of his love, and is inspired with an overflowing persuasion to declare what is virtue, and what he ought to be who would attain to its possession, and what are the duties which it exacts. For, by the intercourse with, and as it were, the very touch of that which is beautiful, he brings forth and produces what he had formerly conceived; and nourishes and educates that which is thus produced together with the object of his love, whose image, whether absent or present, is never divided from his mind. So that those who are thus united are linked by a nobler community and a firmer love, as being the common parents of a lovelier and more endearing progeny than the parents of other children."

But above all these objects of love is one, the highest of all. It is the Absolute Good, and is thus described.

The Absolute  
Good.

"Attempt, I intreat you, to mark what I say with as keen an observation as you can. He who has been disciplined to this point in Love, by contemplating beautiful objects gradually, and in their order, now arriving at the end of all that concerns Love, on a sudden beholds a beauty wonderful in its nature. This is it. O Socrates, for the sake of which all the former labours were endured. It is eternal, unproduced, indestructible; neither subject to increase nor decay; not like other things, partly beautiful and partly deformed; beautiful at one time beautiful and at another time not; not beautiful in relation to one thing and deformed in relation to another; not here beautiful and there deformed; not that of all in the estimation of one person and deformed in the estimation of another; nor can this supreme beauty be figured to any portion of the body, nor like any discourse, nor any science. Nor does it subsist in any other that lives or is, either in earth or in heaven, or in any other place; but it is eternally uniform and consistent, and monoeidic\* with itself. All other things are beautiful through a participation of it,

\* Having and being only one Form

with this condition, that although they are subject to production and decay, it never becomes more or less, or endures any change. When any one, ascending from a correct system of Love, begins to contemplate this supreme beauty, he already touches the consummation of his labour. For such as discipline themselves upon this system, or are conducted by another, beginning to ascend, through these transitory objects which are beautiful, towards that which is beauty itself, proceed as on steps, from the love of one form to that of two, and from that of two, to that of all forms which are beautiful: and from beautiful forms to beautiful habits and institutions, and from institutions to beautiful doctrines; until, from the meditation of many doctrines, they arrive at that which is nothing else than the doctrine of the supreme beauty itself, in the knowledge and contemplation of which at length they repose.

"Such a life as this, my dear Socrates," exclaimed the stranger Prophetess, "spent in the contemplation of the beautiful, is the life for men to live; which if you chance ever to experience, you will esteem far beyond gold and rich garments, and even those lovely persons whom you and many others now gaze on with astonishment, and are prepared neither to eat nor drink so that you may behold and live for ever with these objects of your love! What then shall we imagine to be the aspect of the supreme beauty itself, simple, pure, uncontaminated with the intermixture of human flesh and colours, and all other idle and unreal shapes attendant on mortality; the divine, the original, the supreme, the monoeidic Beautiful itself? What must be the life of him who dwells with and gazes on that which it becomes us all to seek? Think you not that to him alone is accorded the prerogative of bringing forth, not images and shadows of virtue, for he is in contact not with a shadow, but with reality, with virtue itself, in the production and nourishment of which he becomes dear to the Gods, and if such a privilege is conceded to any human being, himself immortal."

"Such, O Phædrus, and my other friends, was what Diotima said. And being persuaded by the words, I have since

occupied myself in attempting to persuade others that it is not easy to find a better assistant than Love in seeking to communicate immortality to our human natures. Wherefore I exhort every one to honour Love ; I hold him in honour, and chiefly exercise myself in amatory matters, and exhort others to do so ; and now and ever do I praise the power and excellence of Love, in the best manner that I can."

Conclusion

We will conclude upon that note. I have tried to give to those who know little or nothing of Plato some idea of what is to be found there : and perhaps I may have awakened in some of my readers the desire to know more of the master. Those who wish to do so, even though they know no Greek, will find the way open to them in translation. And if any of these should be inspired and have the leisure to acquire the Greek language they will not, I think, find the time wasted. For there is no language known to us more perfect, and no writer of it more supreme than Plato.

Most readers, I think, will feel the beauty of this myth. But some may also feel a certain discomfort and even irritation, and that leads me to another point of importance. There are two ways in which dialogue may be treated and both are illustrated by Plato. The first, which seems to have been peculiarly the method of Socrates, is to criticize and dissect opinions and prejudices in order to expose the confusions and contradictions in which they are involved. In doing this it is not necessary to come to a conclusion at all. It is enough to raise the questions ; and that is what Socrates seems to have preferred to do. The only criticism that an intelligent reader is likely to make of such treatment is that all the meanings and mis-meanings have not been sorted out. But it is another matter when the philosopher not only invites to scepticism, but endeavours to substitute conviction. He will then be watched with care, even with

suspicion ; and if at a critical moment he leaves the earth and disappears in heaven, it is only those who sympathize with his views who will care to follow him. A modern parallel may be found in Bergson, who seems to me, and I think to others, to take refuge in rhetoric and metaphor just at the critical point of his argument. There is nothing of which the modern intellect is more impatient. To many, Plato's methods may seem mere moonshine, or at best a hardly honest attempt to sweep away to his conclusion a reader who has not really been convinced.

Nor will such readers confine their objection to the myths ; for in the whole argument of many of his most important dialogues Plato was trying not merely to point out confusions and contradictions in popular views, but also to demonstrate his own philosophy. Take, for instance, the theme of the ' Republic.' In that dialogue Socrates undertakes to show that not only is justice a good, but an absolute good ; that the just man is both better and happier than the unjust man, even if he suffers every evil in being just, and is moreover deprived even of the reputation of justice. Now this is a tremendous paradox. I do not say that it is therefore untrue ; but I think many men, and those not bad men, will feel grave doubts. There comes a point, they will say, at which justice becomes fanaticism. Landor even denies that justice is a good at all. At any rate, there are other goods, and among them are life and happiness, one's own and that of one's friends. Moreover modern men—and the same was true, of course, of many Athenians—may not be impressed when Plato brings to the support of his doctrine the next world with its heaven and hell.



They either won't believe in it, or will think it a harmless speculation, and perhaps a rather mean one to introduce into the discussion. I need hardly point out that we are touching here on some of the great questions of ethics, and, of course, I do not propose to deal with them now. What I wanted to say is that it may be one of the drawbacks of the dialogue form that it tries to impose the judgment of the author behind a screen of splendid rhetoric, or even of great poetry. True, any writer may attempt this, but it is, I think, less easy to do when a man is writing a treatise in the first person which does not pretend to be anything but close argument. For there, at least, you will not feel that you are being cheated, though you may think your author to be a fool or a knave.

These are the principal points that have occurred to me on the subject of the dialogue form. I have suggested that the matter appropriate to that form is anything in which values are involved, whether ethical, political or æsthetic; and I have marked off this matter from that of science by saying that whereas science aims at complete demonstration, whether by logic or experiment, valuation must remain, in the last resort, a matter of direct personal feeling. In saying this I do not mean to deny that most valuations are social. But the dialogue is only suitable, and arises where these social values are being questioned. Greece of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., the eighteenth century in France and the nineteenth and twentieth everywhere are epochs of such questioning, and therefore peculiarly favourable to discussion by dialogue. Further, the more

attractive the background and the more dramatic the characterization, the more successful the method will be. On the other hand it suffers from a certain incompatibility between its dramatic and controversial elements, which prevents it, I think, from being a pure and perfect form of art. This does not trouble me personally very much, because I think the richness of content makes up for the imperfection of form. The case, I would suggest, is analogous to that of opera, where it is very difficult to prevent a clash between the musical and the dramatic elements. But, as I think, the moments where both are harmonized makes the form, nevertheless, a very great one. There is, I think, bound to be a difference of opinion on this matter, and I should not attempt to convert anyone who disagrees with me. For there is every kind of man. Some (perhaps most) hate every form of speculation. Some are pure artists, and hate the impurity of mixed forms. I am a mixed character myself, and like mixed forms. And if anyone retorts that the mixed is also the confused, I should not deny it. I don't see how anyone can help being confused in a universe like this !

## OSCAR WILDE : A CONSIDERATION.

(Born Oct. 16th. 1854 ; died Nov. 30th, 1900.)

BY PATRICK BRAYBROOKE, F.R.S.L.

[Read January 28th, 1931.]

NOT very long ago I happened to meet a youth who knew more about a straight bat than about our literature. On the table in the room in which the meeting took place there lay a book, on the jacket of which was a really excellent portrait of a modern author. The title of the book was "Oscar Wilde: A Study." The youth turned to me, and with a burst of literary enthusiasm said: "Who's Oscar Wilde—is he an actor 'fellah' or something?" I am sure that this young man did not realize that his innocent question contained a germ of an assertion that has ever been made by many about Wilde—namely, that he was, in all his moods, merely an actor, a *poseur*. But the question seemed to me to suggest that it would not be mere waste of time to think again about the Victorian genius who passed away in a third-rate hotel in Paris thirty years ago with a smile on his lips, spring in his wit, but with dead winter in his heart.

Thirty years, always a long time, is a length of time in which a literary position may change tremendously or remain completely stationary. In November of last year the thirtieth anniversary of the death of Wilde left England uninterested, though

I suspect a slight tremor passed through the gaol at Reading. And yet only a few years more than thirty had elapsed since Wilde, the darling of all lionizing London, found those same eulogizing "lions" savage monsters literally gasping for his blood. But this afternoon let us leave as far as we can on one side the tragedy of Wilde's life and fall; let us rather consider in this brief time something of the genius of the writer who, not content with giving us 'The Importance of Being Earnest,' has left with us a whole sheaf of witty sayings, one of which, and not the least meritorious, was that which asked "whether it was the fogs which made the English people or the English people who produced the fogs."

We may as well start our consideration of Wilde with a thought or two about 'The Importance of Being Earnest.' By the writing of this play he gained for himself a place, perhaps a small place, among the playwrights who live. With this play Wilde places himself in the forefront of imaginative dramatists; he takes the art of creation, gathers it very tenderly to himself, and Bunbury is born. You will recall that Bunbury is the admirable relation who helps in the living of a double life, the excellent auxiliary who saves you from boring dinner parties.

So Wilde tells us of the functions of Bunbury when he writes:

I have invented an invaluable permanent invalid called Bunbury, in order that I may be able to go down into the country whenever I choose.

With this invention Wilde can be called a dramatist who started the philosophy of "Bunburyism" which

is still in existence, and I fear frequently forgets to whom it is indebted. All the way through this play Wilde seems to say : " I will make you laugh," but " please read between the lines now and then." The whole essence of his wit in this play is that it is *smart* wit which deals with smart people. It is smart wit which lets us know that Lady Bracknell cannot understand how people can live on the wrong side of Belgrave Square ; it is again smart wit which gives us a picture of Lady Bracknell's distress that Jack should have been bred in a handbag, and her refusal to be comforted on being told that the waiting-room in which he was left at Victoria was on the Brighton line. All this is clever fooling, but it is something more. It is a man of genius not only finding his genius, but risking his genius by being almost too funny. It is, I think, a true criticism that Wilde makes his characters too clever. For instance, you will recall Miss Prism, the charming governess who I am sure still picks blackberries in the English lanes. She is not a fool, she is prim and careful in speech, but I do not think she would speak like this. She is talking to Cecily, and Wilde makes her say :

*Miss Prism* : Cecily, you will read your political economy in my absence. The chapter on the fall of the rupee you may omit. It is somewhat too sensational. Even these metallic problems have their melodramatic sides.

This, I suggest, is not Miss Prism speaking, but Wilde, and Wilde a little careless of character creation, Wilde letting his cleverness lead him by the nose, and not being quite clever enough to realize that a brake must be put on his own imagination sometimes.

'The Importance of Being Earnest' represents Wilde at the height of his fame, in the days when he really did think that the world belonged to him, in the days when he knew that money was only valuable in so much as it could buy some new sensation ; and yet there is always in the midst of this glut of success the sober thinker suddenly murmuring, almost as if ashamed of its common sense, "but you cannot buy a sunset." And he was, indeed, to know that his own sunset, not long after, was never quite to be sold.

We shall not understand this play if we are merely content to laugh at it ; we shall not understand it unless we are prepared to admit quite frankly that often Wilde makes the characters in it his slaves ; we shall not understand it unless we recognize also that not seldom the characters are remarkably true to life.

Let us turn to a much more ordinary play, yet one of high dramatic worth—'A Woman of No Importance.' In writing this play Wilde wrote a drama that was almost conventional. The main character, Lord Illingworth, is a typical Wilde character. He is clever and aristocratic—a combination more usual than certain politicians would have us believe. He is aristocratic and unscrupulous, he speaks in epigrams, and few of them are unworthy of serious attention. This play again literally bristles with wit, and it is wit that could only have been written by Wilde. Some of the best dialogue is between Mrs. Allonby and Lord Illingworth. They are two people bored with life, and who could better interpret two such people than Wilde ? It is all quite natural

dialogue. Mrs. Allonby is the type of woman who evokes an instant response from Lord Illingworth, while Lord Illingworth finds Mrs. Allonby a strop on which to sharpen his wits. Here are a few lines taken at random when these two charming people (not related to Mr. Michael Arlen) fence. Lord Illingworth has just remarked as a kind of joke that he is a little surprised that Mrs. Allonby only likes him for one thing, for has he not, after all, so many bad qualities ?

*Mrs. Allonby :* Ah—don't be too conceited about them. You may lose them as you grow old.

*Lord Illingworth :* I never intend to grow old    The soul is born old but grows young. That is the comedy of life.

*Mrs. Allonby :* And the body is born young and grows old. That is life's tragedy.

In the limited time that I have at my disposal I am only able to touch on two plays of Wilde's. Both, I believe indicate that he was not only a front-rank dramatist, but also no mean thinker. I believe we can fairly safely predict immortality for 'The Importance of Being Earnest.' It has been said that this play places Wilde by the side of Sheridan. We can then rest assured that Sheridan's reputation is permanently secure. Wilde is dead, but his plays remain. He is for all time a playwright of importance, and may we risk a little joke and say that he is a man of some importance ? May I now ask you to consider for a brief space Wilde in that delightful work which he called 'Intentions.'

If we wish to consider Wilde in his most perfect form of expression we shall not turn to his plays, nor

to his stories, nor even to his verse, but we shall make close acquaintance with his written duologues, which are to be found expressed so exquisitely in 'Intentions.' The form of dialectic based on the Platonian duologues is admirably suited for the interpretation of parts of Wilde's philosophy. He was a man who loved intellectual gymnastics and, unlike some intellectuals, he loved to see beautiful thoughts expressed beautifully. He was, indeed, ill content that an argument between two young men obviously belonging to the æsthetic school should not take place with a background of the Green Park, and an atmosphere which postulated a champagne supper and a look at the early morning roses in Covent Garden. Wilde was practical in this respect : he knew that intellectual food had to be kept going by repeated applications of supper. He knew only too well that beautiful thoughts came more easily in congenial surroundings. 'De Profundis' was an exception proving a rule. 'Intentions' arose from a fundamental attitude of Wilde towards life. He held that, generally speaking, thought was unpopular, and people looked upon thinking as a kind of disease. He throws out his main challenge that Nature hates mind. Thus he seeks to substantiate his position by means of a few cryptic sentences that are more true in the general than in the particular :

Nothing is more evident than that Nature hates Mind. Thinking is the most unhealthy thing in the world, and people die of it just as they die of any other disease. Fortunately, in England, at any rate, thought is not catching. Our splendid physique as a people is entirely due to our national stupidity.



Now this kind of thinking is typical of Wilde. There is the sensible suggestion that thought is unpopular because it implies a breaking away, and then there is that sudden jump into superficiality which has so much discredited Wilde as a serious thinker—the absurd idea that the English do not think. Such a position is hardly consistent with a nation that still leads the world both in thought and action.

One of the most important arguments that arise in 'Intentions' is the assertion that Life imitates Art. I do not think that the veracity of this generalization is open to much doubt. Wilde then goes on to prove, at least to his own satisfaction, that not only does Life imitate Art, but it plays the part of the sedulous ape further and imitates literature. So then we find, according to Wilde, that life imitates bad literature, it imitates good literature. So he philosophizes on his little logical excursion, and writes, as though for an instant he had forgotten all about smart wit and had become a professor of psychology in the Oxford which gave him the Newdigate Prize :

The boy burglar is simply the inevitable result of life's imitative instinct. He is Fact, occupied as Fact usually is with trying to reproduce Fiction, and what we see in him is repeated on an extended scale throughout the whole of life.

Another excellent duologue in 'Intentions,' though really dreadfully sober and sedate, considers the critic as artist. It would be uncritical to contend that Wilde has any original arguments. He just makes a serious contribution to the problem of criticism, and asks the question—rather a fatal one for him unfortunately—what do we owe to Greece?

It would be a fairer question to ask—What do we *not* owe to Greece? And here is what Wilde tells us we get from Greece. Greece will not feel that she had in Wilde no true and loyal admirer. For he says with a burst of enthusiasm :

For after all, what is our primary debt to the Greeks? Simply the critical spirit. And this spirit which they exercised on questions of religion and science, of ethics and metaphysics, of politics and education, they exercised on questions of art also ; they have left us the most flawless system of criticism the world has ever seen.

All this is, of course, the sober, serious Wilde, the thinker, very far removed from the dramatist telling us that Lane the butler did not listen to his master's music because he did not think it polite to do so. And then all at once after this fine tribute to Greece Wilde drops with a sickening thud, and we feel we are reading the writing of a titled woman journalist who is just "stunting" because her paper tells her to. For concerning the art of novel-writing he says :

Anybody can write a three volumed novel. It merely requires a complete ignorance of both life and literature.

Such a quotation merely brings out the everlasting tragedy of Wilde. I do not refer to his peculiar following of his dictum that the only way to beat a temptation is to give way to it, nor do I refer to his absurd contention that any experience is good for art so long as it is a *new* experience. I refer to his abominable habit of always trying to be clever when he was of sufficient genius to be clever without trying. When Wilde was natural, in his plays, in his novel, in his fairy stories, in his verse, he was never far

removed from brilliance of thought and expression. But these sudden falls into cheap journalese have, I believe, done his reputation far more harm than can be easily estimated.

Therefore let us try and look at 'Intentions' as a whole, forgetting the falls into superficiality, forgetting the excursions into nonsense of which I have given two examples. The work is, taken altogether, a creditable piece of dialectic. It is both cultured and yet not academically snobbish—if I dare use the phrase here. And we must not forget that all the time in reality Wilde was a dreamer and his path led close to the stars, and all the closer as the night became for him more densely black.

So before I pass on to 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' let us look at these lines, lovely lines that come at the end of the argument in 'Intentions,' when the two young men are about to wander into London to welcome the fullness of the dawn :

*Gilbert* : Yes, I am a dreamer. For a dreamer is one who can only find his way by moonlight, and his punishment is that he sees the dawn before the rest of the world.

*Ernest* : His punishment ?

*Gilbert* : And his reward. But see, it is dawn already. Draw back the curtains and open the windows. How cool the morning air is ! Piccadilly lies at our feet like a long riband of silver. A faint purple mist hangs over the Park, and the shadows of the white houses are purple. It is too late to sleep. Let us go down to Covent Garden and look at the roses. Come—I am tired of thought.

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The fact that a man of genius writes only one long novel may, I think, indicate two positions, the one, that such a man will write only one novel of genius

rather than four of semi-genius; the other, that he is so satisfied with other work that fiction takes a kind of secondary place. I do not know why Oscar Wilde wrote only one novel, and I am not sure that the matter is one of importance. That we have added to our English fiction 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' is probably all that really matters.

Let us look at this novel as a work of art, and leave out the controversy as to its purity or otherwise. In its purely technical aspect 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' has all the attributes necessary to an outstanding novel. It is new—at least in English fiction; it gives a wide display of acute characterization; it possesses many moments of real drama; it deals with a very strange character, but a character not so strange as our British mind likes to think. I do not suppose that there are many here who are unacquainted with the plot of Dorian Gray, although not long ago a man asked me what was the picture-book with which Wilde was associated. The theme of 'Dorian Gray' is almost of the fairy type. Dorian wants a good thing too long; he wishes to remain young for ever. This cannot quite be accomplished, and Basil Hallward, an artist, paints a portrait of him. Dorian expresses a wish that his picture may record the passing of the years, while he himself remains young. This is how Wilde records the wish—a dangerous one if the picture is a portrait of your soul, and your soul happens to be a little eccentric and possibly original:

"I am jealous of everything whose beauty does not die. I am jealous of the portrait you have painted of me. Why should it keep what I must lose? Every moment that passes

takes something from me, and gives something to it. Oh, if it were only the other way. If the picture could change and I could be always what I am now."

'The Picture of Dorian Gray,' in spite of Wilde "hold-ups" for epigrams, moves very rapidly, and there is what our American press friends would call plenty of "meat" in the novel. The main incident, when Dorian, in a fit of mad rage, kills Basil Hallward the artist, is, I believe, psychologically sound. Dorian Gray does not commit the murder for pure revenge, but from a kind of subtle idea that if he kills the creator of the picture he will gain some compensation for the making of the portrait, which is recording with horrid truth all the vices which are gradually destroying Dorian Gray.

The characterization in 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' is executed with care. Lord Henry is rather like Lord Illingworth, completely *blasé* and completely charming. His life is bounded on one side by duchesses, and on the other side by scented cigarettes and crushed strawberries. Basil Hallward is a fine artist, and makes rational behaviour the whole of his make-up. Campbell, a minor character who, you may recall, gets rid of Hallward's murdered body, is a terrible person. He has been a close friend of Dorian and becomes a deadly enemy; more need not be said.

'The Picture of Dorian Gray' in its escapes from tragedy is full of witty sayings, and we are with the old Wilde once again, quite certain that burial in Paris shows a want of right feeling at the last. May I give you one quotation which shows the wit in this tragic novel :

Yes, it certainly was a tedious party. Two of the people he had never seen before, and the others consisted of Ernest Harrowden, one of those middle-aged mediocrities so common in London clubs who have no enemies but are thoroughly disliked by their friends, Lady Ruxton, an over-dressed woman of forty-seven, with a hook nose, who was always trying to get herself compromised, but was so peculiarly plain that to her disappointment no one would ever believe anything against her. Mrs. Erlynne, a pushing nobody, with a delightful lisp and Venetian red hair : Lady Alice Chapman, his hostesses's daughter, a dowdy dull girl with one of those characteristic British faces that, once seen, are never remembered ; and her husband, a red-cheeked, white-whiskered creature, who, like so many of his class, was under the impression that inordinate joviality can atone for an entire lack of ideas.

What, then, is the real character of Dorian Gray ? He is, I think, a man who all the time, in spite of every kind of vice, means well. He always hates the dreadful trend of his own life. I am glad that Wilde, at the end of his novel of genius, killed Dorian Gray ; it would have been too cruel to let him live. Let us just look at the last scene, when Dorian is dead in the great house in Grosvenor Square—dead because he has tried to kill the hated picture :

When they entered they found, hanging upon the wall, a splendid portrait of their master as they had last seen him, in all the wonder of his exquisite youth and beauty. Lying on the floor was a dead man, in evening dress with a knife in his heart. He was withered, wrinkled and loathsome of visage. It was not till they had examined the rings that they recognized who it was.

\* \* \*

From the point of view of quantity Wilde's output in short stories is comparatively small. But in quality they are excellent, though perhaps unequal.

'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' is, I think, Wilde's best short story ; it concerns a young lord who cannot live with an easy conscience until he has committed a murder. 'The Model Millionaire' is, perhaps, the most ordinary. This is merely about a millionaire who is an artist's model and is also ethically a model millionaire. 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' has at the beginning a very famous description of the kind of London reception at which Wilde was always to be seen and of course heard. I give a few lines of this celebrated piece of descriptive prose :

It was certainly a wonderful medley of people. Gorgeous peeresses chatted affably to violent Radicals ; popular preachers brushed coat-tails with eminent sceptics ; a perfect bevy of bishops kept following a stout *Prima Donna* from room to room ; on the staircase stood several Royal Academicians disguised as artists ; and it was said at one time the supper room was absolutely crammed with geniuses. In fact, it was one of Lady Windermere's best nights, and the Princess stayed till nearly half-past eleven.

A short story that is almost an essay is 'The Portrait of Mr. W. H.,' in which you will recollect there is a discussion regarding the person to whom Shakespeare addressed his sonnets. Cyril Graham has a theory (I believe Wilde's own theory) that they were addressed to a boy actor. The theory is so vital to Graham that his inability to convince the literary world induces him to blow out his brains. I cannot think of any modern author who would blow out his brains for a literary theory, which is perhaps as well. At the same time Wilde did wish to make it clear that literary theory is of great importance, and a man might do worse than give up his life for it.

Perhaps Wilde saw that those who came after him, even those in the literary universe, would be so unidealistic as only to commit suicide for lack of money. 'The Portrait of Mr. W. H.' is a warning that those who have literary theories had better keep them quiet until they have achieved such a firm reputation, that the conservative literary party must listen to the arguments from the other side of the literary house of commons.

Very rapidly I must pass to Oscar Wilde as a teller of fairy stories. The whimsicality of Wilde has not received quite so much attention as his wit. It is easy to understand this. The whimsical talent in literature is a more ordinary talent than wit. In the case of Wilde I feel that his whimsicality was the expression of a side of him which could best be revealed in the imaginative stories which I call his fairy tales. But they are more than fairy tales. they are beautiful fairy tales, and not too ridiculously fantastic. It is far from easy to say which is the best, because they are all so good. His most famous story of this character is 'The Happy Prince,' and it is probably the best in spite of being the most popular. 'The Happy Prince' has a moral, and few fairy stories have not a moral. You will think back to the simple little plot. Here is The Happy Prince in his Hans Andersen setting, a proud little person, for is he not perched on the top of a tall column so that he can see all that goes on in the city? Wilde thus introduces him to us, and we can never be too grateful to him for the courtesy of this introduction :

High above the city, on a tall column stood the statue of the Happy Prince. He was gilded all over with thin leaves



of fine gold, for eyes he had two sapphires, and a large red ruby glowed on his sword-hilt.

And I am sorry to say that the grown-up people do not appreciate him so much as the children. We have a little dialogue showing us that Wilde is too well aware that you may commit any crime as long as you do not dream :

“ He looks just like an angel,” said the Charity Children, as they came out of the cathedral in their bright scarlet cloaks and their clean white pinafores.

“ How do you know ? ” said the Mathematical Master, “ you have never seen one.”

“ Ah ! but we have in our dreams,” answered the children ; and the Mathematical Master frowned and looked very severe, for he did not approve of children dreaming.

The plot is more than simple. The Happy Prince strips himself of his fine adornments that the wretched people in the squalid parts of the city may be made less unhappy. The climax, when the Happy Prince dies of cold, catches Wilde in one of his best moods. So he writes at the end of the tale :

“ Bring me the two most precious things in the city,” said God to one of His Angels : and the Angel brought Him the leaden heart and the dead bird.

“ You have rightly chosen,” said God, “ for in my garden of Paradise this little bird shall sing for evermore, and in my city of gold the Happy Prince shall praise me.”

In ‘ The Nightingale and the Rose ’ a note of cynicism creeps in. It merely shows Wilde telling us that whatever you do you cannot please a woman.

The fairy tales reveal Wilde in his most delightful mood, but it would be obviously absurd to claim for them the genius that lies behind his plays or his novel.

I have now to turn to that part of Wilde's work which for many is his most important contribution to permanent literature. I refer of course to 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol.' You will remember that this Ballad was written in the summer of 1897 at a chalet at Bernéval near to Dieppe. Wilde had still a little over three years in which to attempt to gather together his ruined and smashed life. That he never recovered from his tragedy is not in the least surprising. He made one last desperate effort, almost like the last great spurt that wins the Derby, and gave us the blue riband of the ballad, the famous 'Ballad of Reading Gaol.' If we would very briefly compare the post-prison Wilde with the Wilde of the London drawing-room days, we may read this ballad side by side with some of the dialogue in 'The Importance of Being Earnest.' The latter is by a man who finds the world at his feet; the former is by a man who has found himself right out of his own world and deposited in the universe of tragic reality.

What kind of poet, then, was Wilde? He was, I believe, a humanitarian and descriptive poet. He did not introduce any new form into poetry. 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol' is steeped in atmosphere, it is easy to read, it sings its way along, it defies those who thought that with 'De Profundis' Wilde would write no more. It is, on the whole, free from *personal bitterness*; that had spent itself in 'De Profundis.' The Philosophy that lies behind the 'Ballad' is really the whole of Wilde's philosophy: that action and reaction are not really very different from sanity following madness or madness following

sanity. So Wilde puts this kind of philosophy into one of the frequently-quoted verses in the 'Ballad':

Yet each man kills the thing he loves,  
By each let this be heard,  
Some do it with a bitter look,  
Some with a flattering word,  
The coward does it with a kiss,  
The brave man with a sword.

We shall get no real idea of the reason of 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol' unless we consider one or two verses which suggested themselves to Wilde as a result of his prison experiences. He refers with much truth to the exercise round the prison yard. So he writes, looking back to the mornings when he went round with the other prisoners, one of whom whispered, "Well, Lord Henry, this must be worse for you than for us":

With slouch and swing around the ring  
We trod the Fools' Parade!  
We did not care: we knew we were  
The Devil's Own Brigade:  
And shaven head and feet of lead  
Make a merry masquerade.

And I pass to the bitterest of all the verses that Wilde wrote, as the sea washed the shores of France—the one country in which he could find refuge:

For they starve the little frightened child  
Till it weeps both night and day:  
And they scourge the weak, and flog the fool,  
And gibe the old and grey,  
And some grow mad, and all grow bad,  
And none a word may say.

In his pre-prison poetical work Wilde was just a pleasant poet. Leaving out the 'Ballad' his

poetry of itself is not important, but it is naturally interesting owing to Wilde's fame. Two verses taken at random from his general poems will give his limit and scope. Here is a simple verse about someone who does not like getting caught in a shower :

You were always afraid of a shower,  
Just like a flower ;  
I remember you started and ran  
When the rain began.

This time it is about the breaking of a poet's heart :

Well, if my heart must break,  
Dear love, for your sake,  
It will break in music I know,  
Poet's hearts break so.

After all it was only natural that Wilde should write poetry. The best part of his mind was a poem, the worst part was reaction. Wilde has left behind him 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol,' and the other poems do not count.

No lecture, however cursory, on the work of Oscar Wilde can afford to leave out some reference to his work written in the gaol at Reading—the famous 'De Profundis.' It is part of a long letter addressed to Lord Alfred Douglas.

'De Profundis' proved what Wilde always contended so vigorously, that though you can imprison a man you cannot imprison his imagination—a contingency which is both good and bad. There are really two themes in this essay, written when Wilde had sounded the depths, and knew that they were much more real than the heights on which he had formerly basked. The first and most significant theme is the use and beauty of sorrow ; and the second, a

Christological speculation on Christ as the supreme artist. The essay is full of melancholy glimpses. Here is one, and Wilde is writing it in a cell in Reading Gaol while the merry month of May is outside, laughing and chatting that the summer is at hand :

Outside the merry month of May fills all the world with gladness, but winter remains in a prison cell all the year round.

Then there is Wilde claiming that love is a sacrament and ought to be taken kneeling. This is a long way from the pre-prison Wilde at a dinner alleging the wine to be so heavenly that it should be drunk kneeling.

'De Profundis' ends with Wilde's call to Nature.

The gentleness of Nature will be balm to him. He may find man indifferent, but Nature will understand. Nature will indeed welcome him when he comes out of prison, and in a few years the welcome was to be intimate and all-embracing.

So he writes at the end of 'De Profundis' :

She will hang the night with stars so that I may walk abroad in the darkness without stumbling, and send the wind over my footprints so that none may track me to my hurt : she will cleanse me in great waters, and with bitter herbs make me whole.

\* \* \*

In this short consideration of Wilde as a dramatist, novelist, essayist, short story writer and poet I am conscious of too many omissions. A selector can only please himself ; that is why literary selection is the most selfish and pleasing of tasks. A selector always leaves out just what someone hoped would

have been included, and he can but take note of the reproof and determine to do the same next time.

We live in a literary age in which it is becoming fashionable to write books which endeavour, many successfully, to rewrite history and look at it through the medium of the modern point of view. We are prone in this country to intermingle too much an artist's output and an artist's life. In this respect I believe we fall short of accurate literary criticism.

Wilde's life was one of the great tragedies of literature, but literature would have experienced the tragedy of loss had he not been born. He has left us much notable work, especially in the realms of the theatre and fiction. He allowed success to ruin him, and he was foolish enough to think that all would be forgiven him because he was an artist. He should have remembered that this would, on the other hand, secure his condemnation by many people.

One of the Fellows of this Society, Mr. G. K. Chesterton, wrote concerning the mortality of writers and the immortality of the written word thus :

It is not we, but the word, that is winged and is immortal, and our only ambition is to help the Divine gift of language and letters to outlive us all.

We have in our keeping the immortal remains of Oscar Wilde, while France with her charity keeps tenderly of him all that is mortal.

Ours is the greater responsibility. It will be to our lasting disgrace if we do not hold the trust precious, as we hold sacred all that goes to the making of our permanent literature. Oscar Wilde contributed to this store, and we can thank him best by a reasonable blending of forgetfulness and remembrance.

## LORD ELGIN AND THE MARBLES.

BY COURTENAY POLLOCK, R.B.A., R.B.S., R.W.A.,  
F.R.S.L.

[Read April 27th, 1932.]

THE affinity between literature and the other arts and sciences is so close and the mental qualities which develop variously in individuals are so often identical in their beginnings that we may say that, after all, chance alone decides upon what highway genius will set out, and up what lateral valleys it will presently explore. A painter or a poet, a musician, a sculptor or an inventor, a physicist, a historian or an engineer may be the product of mental qualities common to them all, and for which we comprehensively write down "imagination."

It is inevitable, therefore, that some should travel on a road some little space and then forsake it for a more inviting avenue, that men of eminence should abandon at the beck of opportunity one channel of achievement for another, and that many should excel in more than one. And it is interesting to observe that where excellence has been achieved in more than one pursuit, literature in all times has been far the most frequently the good companion.

The gentle mind of Marcus Aurelius, which left us one of the greatest stores of peace and solace, was none the less that of a soldier of renown, of an eminent

lawyer and of a distinguished statesman. Literature would certainly have been much poorer without the Plinys, though the elder was foremostly a soldier, and one who did considerable scientific work, while the younger was eminent in both law and politics. The astonishing diplomat, Plutarch, we remember well as a philosopher, but best of all as the most valuable biographer we can name. Had Cicero not lived, Caesar would have been the greatest orator of his time, and as a historian he has never been surpassed in dignity, directness and simplicity : and Leonardo da Vinci, history's outstanding figure of versatility, will ever live with us in painting and in sculpture, in engineering and in architecture, and yet as one who succeeded, though in smaller measure, in science and in literature.

But names come tumbling <sup>in</sup> to, ~~ugh~~ <sup>ugh</sup> our memory readily as stars across the firmament : the Venerable Bede, medico and astronomer ; <sup>he</sup> the rascally Cellini ; Rousseau, the composer ; and <sup>h</sup>iderot, art critic ; Wagner, who at thirteen translated twelve books of the Odyssey ; and we have Steven<sup>son</sup>, the barrister ; Rossetti, the painter ; Du Maurier, the illustrator ; Morris, designer ; and Thomas Fardy, architect. But while literature has more often been enriched by the genius of other trades, she has, herself, been fruitful breeding-ground for other interests ; and for the many upon whom memory may call in this respect, Boccaccio, a giant, will suffice as an example. Boccaccio's important work in life was in the field of political diplomacy ; nevertheless this work was hardly yet afoot when all his greatest literary tasks were done.



We cannot be surprised that literature should play so great a part in the genius of versatility, because literature has ever been the handmaiden of all the arts and sciences, and performs, one might say, the duties of a liaison officer for and between them all. It will, of course, be borne in mind that in a large degree the value of such literature as may be produced in the demonstration of, and intercourse between, the arts and sciences, and which has suggested the likeness of a liaison officer, is to be found more in its recording faculty and its informative device than in sheer beauty of language or in engaging fancy. Nevertheless it is as liaison officer that literature exercises her most useful functions, and if in this pursuit her style is in the bulk of moderate worth, the liaison officer has many masters to obey. It is, then, in the performance of these duties that literature concerns herself with the present matter.

We would expect that this versatility of genius should result in quick and understanding intercourse between the arts and sciences upon occasion; and such occasions, though not frequently presenting issues of importance, do not uncommonly occur. But it could hardly be thought that circumstances would so fall about that nearly all the sciences and arts throughout the world would become concerned with, and the interest of their greatest figures focused on, a single and important point at one and the same moment. This phenomenon, however, did occur at the opening of the last century, at a moment when it might have been supposed that the world was insatiably preoccupied with war.

In the first years of the nineteenth century many

of the greatest figures of the world found their interest captured by what someone contemptuously called "a set of old stones." Monarchs and generals and admirals, statesmen from premiers downwards, divines from parish priests up to the Pope, men of letters, men of science, and the greatest living painters, sculptors, architects and critics, all became concerned with a collection of ancient sculptures hitherto almost unknown, and now to become universally regarded as the finest works of art known to the modern world, and properly to be linked for ever with the name of Elgin. I say "known to the modern world," but, though 120 years ago these treasures furnished food for conversation wherever people met, after the decay of the classical vogue which they created they lapsed into comparative obscurity, and, lacking the advertisement they enjoyed on coming to these shores, they have remained more or less forgotten until the restoration of the Parthenon provoked the present controversy respecting the possible replacement in that temple of such of the Elgin marbles as belong to it.

The Parthenon, it will be remembered, is the crowning splendour of the Acropolis—that wonderful group of ancient Grecian buildings which occupies the dominating mass of rock which rises in the southern part of Athens. It is the most perfect, the most impressive and refined example of Greek architecture, the finest product of intellect and artistry the world possesses. Imagine if you will Edinburgh Castle on its hill, Nottingham upon its rock, or the Birmingham Town Hall on its originally intended stylobate perched at the summit of Hill Street ;

imagine St. Paul's splendidly isolated at the head of Ludgate; and you are some little way towards imagining the Parthenon's majestic presence. In 1687 the temple, almost intact till then, was partially destroyed by the Venetians in their attack upon the Turks, who were then in possession of the country. And amidst the ruins of this and other ancient edifices soon sprang up fortifications and mean cottages, the ruins of the Grecian structures providing convenient material for these operations; and presently the Acropolis became an agglomeration of ill-conditioned military works, sordid dwellings and untidy vegetable patches, amidst which columns and architectural fragments thrust up—piteous limbs of a forgotten majesty. In such condition did his agents find it in 1800, when the seventh Earl of Elgin was come as British Ambassador to Constantinople.

It is important to note that Elgin's appointment in 1799 occurred at the precise moment when the Turkish forces in Palestine were being cut up by Napoleon Bonaparte, because this had undoubtedly a direct bearing upon Elgin's influential relations with the Ottoman government, and consequently upon his acquisition of the marbles. Having followed closely upon Nelson's defeat of the French at the Battle of the Nile in the preceding year, these events certainly augmented Turkey's fear of Bonaparte, and enhanced her trust in the arms of Great Britain. Thus Elgin's arrival at the Porte happened at a time when Turkey's policy should have been, and indeed was, to propitiate the power in whom she saw so valuable an ally.

In examining the military and political situation

of that moment, we find that to the Turkish mind a climax had been reached when it behoved her to make choice of champion. We will say that our ascendancy in Turkish eyes had started with the Nile, close on two years before. Napoleon had, as we know, a quite unreasonable hankering for Eastern conquest; and now, dazzled with the knowledge that to anyone with such ambition almost anything can happen, and setting more store on splendour than on plan, he sails for Egypt, puts Malta in his pocket on the way, and arrives to rout the Turkish army at the Pyramids. But this is quickly followed by our destruction of his fleet at the Battle of the Nile: so, being deprived of transport, and virtually marooned in a land that flowed with very little milk and much less honey, Bonaparte, for the lack of something better to do, attacks Jaffa, massacres two thousand Turks, and proceeds jauntily to Acre, which doubtless would have met no happier fate had we not been at hand with the squadron of Sir Sidney Smith to inflict upon Napoleon the first serious reverse he, himself, had suffered. This success so encourages the Sultan that in an ecstasy of confidence he despatches 15,000 men to Aboukir, where Bonaparte, having doubled back, destroys them.

And here, in 1799, there is a lull, during which Napoleon leaves his army in Egypt to attend to new menaces at home, and Britain, having missed him in the Mediterranean, gathers up Malta, and in March of 1801, with Abercrombie's army, cleans up Egypt of all that Napoleon had left there. We find, then, that while the Turks were suffering defeat after defeat at the hands of Bonaparte, British arms chastised

him after each occasion, greatly to the benefit of Turkey. It must have been a most convincing record : Napoleon's Pyramids, our Nile ; Napoleon's Jaffa, our Acre ; Napoleon's Aboukir, our Aboukir. And now follows immediately our brilliant little business at Copenhagen in April, 1801, news of which must have reached the Porte about midsummer of that year. The moment is worth remembering. Elgin meanwhile had been experiencing considerable obstruction from the Turks at Athens, and the bearing which this event had on his operations there is made clearer when we read his evidence given to the Select Committee of the House of Commons later. To this Committee who were examining his right to ownership Lord Elgin said : " In proportion with the change of affairs in our relations towards Turkey, the facilities of access to the Acropolis were increased to me and to all English travellers, and about the middle of the summer of 1801 all difficulties were removed." I think it should be clear, then, that this latest victory removed the last lingering doubt in Turkish minds, for though Copenhagen, as we know, and as Lord Nelson was happy to admit, was won by an indifferent-sized turbot, the Turks were as ignorant of that as were most people. And, anyhow, it was our turbot. The story of how this turbot died for England may warrant repetition.\*

There was some little friction between Nelson and his Chief, Sir Hyde Parker, which boded good for neither the interests of the State nor Nelson's hope of some participation in the plans for Copenhagen. During the passage to the Baltic Lieutenant Layman

\* *Naval Chronicle*, vol. xxxvii, p. 466

mentioned in Nelson's hearing that he had once seen a fine turbot caught on the Dogger Bank.

This being a mere casual remark, nothing more would have been thought of it, had not Nelson, after showing great anxiety in his inquiries when they should be on the Dogger Bank, significantly said to Mr. Layman, "Do you think we could catch a turbot?" After a try or two a small turbot was caught. Lord Nelson appeared delighted, and called out, "Send it to Sir Hyde." Something being said about the risk of sending a boat, from the great sea, lowering weather, and its being dark, his Lordship said with much meaning, "I know the Chief is fond of good living, and he shall have the turbot." That his Lordship was right appeared by the result, as the boat returned with a note of compliment and thanks from Parker. The turbot having opened a communication, the effect was wonderful. At Merton. Mr. Layman told Lord Nelson that a man eminent in the naval profession had said to him, "Do tell me how Parker came to take the laurel from his own brow, and place it on Nelson's?" "What did you say?" asked Nelson. "That it was not a gift," replied Layman, "as your Lordship had gained the victory by a turbot." "A turbot?" "Yes, my lord, I well recollect your great desire to catch a turbot, and your astonishing many, by insisting upon its being immediately sent to Sir Hyde, who condescended to return a civil note; without which opening your Lordship would not have been consulted in the Cattegat, and without such intercourse your Lordship would not have got the detached squadron; without which there would not have been any engagement and consequently no victory." Lord Nelson smilingly said, "You are right."

Had Turkey wished a further reason to befriend us, it was present in the death of the Czar Paul about the same moment, for this event resulted in the immediate break-up of the Armed Neutrality League of Prussia, Sweden, Denmark and Russia—an alliance

which, for a moment, had left Britain virtually single-handed against France, and whose break-up brought us into friendly intercourse with Russia, Turkey's most powerful neighbour.

The marbles were not purchased, but were removed under a special permit from the Porte ; and I am dwelling at some length upon these circumstances to show that though Elgin was correct in stating that he had not obtained this sanction by virtue of his office, it was nevertheless a propitiatory gesture to British arms, and not a gratuity to an individual hitherto unknown, or to one who had done nothing to excite their gratitude. With Nelson, for example, the matter might have worn a different complexion, for he was a demigod. In a letter to his wife a few months earlier, Nelson writes, " My pride is that at Constantinople, from the Grand Signior to the lowest Turk, the name of Nelson is familiar in their mouths." And testimony more tangible was the gift of a golden-headed sword presented by the Greeks of Zante, together with a diamond-studded truncheon which, Southey tells us, " contained all the diamonds the island could furnish." Nelson was the embodiment of British power ; the name of Elgin stood for little to either Greek or Turk.

The name of Elgin will suffer no harm if others who conceived the scheme and carried out the work receive a wider recognition. It was Thomas Harrison, an architect in his employ at home, who urged on Elgin that a close knowledge of these Grecian works would be of great value to our arts, and that his term of office might be utilized to such an end by making casts and drawings of Athenian antiquities. Elgin

agreed, and sought assistance and advice of Pitt and of Lord Granville and of others, proposing that an undertaking of such evident importance to our arts might properly receive assistance by governmental grant. In this, however, he was disappointed ; so, of his own resources he made up his expeditionary force of draughtsmen, moulders and mechanics, having appointed as his private secretary one William Richard Hamilton. To Hamilton is due in very large degree the growth of small beginnings to results of consequence, and the successful issues to continuous reverses. He should not be confused with Sir William Hamilton, with whose period and interests in life his own, however, ran so strangely parallel. He was destined to become in turn Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, British Minister at Naples, a notable Secretary of the Dilettanti Society, and Trustee of the British Museum.

The first draughtsman to be approached by Elgin was a young man of twenty-four who already had some reputation as an artist ; but he wanted too much money. His name was Turner ; and Ruskin wrote a book about him which he called ‘ Modern Painters.’ At Messina Elgin appointed as his Chief of Works Battista Lusieri, a topographic artist recommended by Sir William Hamilton, and to whose archæological ability, shrewdness and untiring efforts and extraordinary patience we are indebted for the comprehensiveness of the collection.

Few of those who understand the harm suffered by the marbles under the Turkish *régime* will blame Lord Elgin overmuch for using, in order to secure the sculptures, means which might be thought somewhat



oblique to-day. Europe was then in just such another melting-pot as threatened her more recently. This, however, had not dulled our acquisitive inclinations, but must have tended to augment them ; and while the spirit of grab-as-grab-can ran somewhat riot in this and other countries, the archæological discoveries of Sir William Hamilton, another of our plenipotentiaries in the Levant, had stimulated our appetite for classical antiquities. To state our mental attitude in few words, we shared with others the spirit of the privateer who, operating in a time of general flux, recognized the truths of opportunity and took what Chance afforded.

But in this present taking we must recognize the *lasting service done to posterity—the salvage of a treasure quite unique, quite peerless, quite irreplaceable, whose ultimate entire destruction was the inevitable end awaiting it.* Still, even if it savours of a paradox, I must confess I think that such an end was most unlikely, because had it not been taken by a Briton, France would most assuredly have seized this which she had coveted for so long. It was merely the fruits of the fortunes of the wars, the fruits of Copenhagen ; turbot does not always die in vain.

I have recalled that the making of moulds and drawings was the suggestion of Harrison, the architect ; and Elgin's intentions until now had been limited to this. But Dr. Philip Hunt, the Embassy Chaplain, urged that a permit be secured which should allow the removal of all stones having inscriptions on them. And this was done. It was encouraging, but the chaplain had, it seems, a *flair* for large-scale operations, and he bethought him. July was drawing

to its close : and all Frenchmen had been arrested, those who still remained in Athens being now put aboard a vessel bound for the capital. To these unlucky Gauls belonged most of the blame for Elgin's recent difficulties ; so now was the hour, here the place, and the chaplain was the man. He would not waste more time on plaster-moulding, but would remove the very stones themselves—not only stones with writings on them, but a good deal more. The *firman*, or permit, might perhaps be made to stretch a bit : and this was done, and little time was lost in removing from the Parthenon all the sculptures it was possible to take without important damage. The ease with which this thing went forward must have inflamed the chaplain's heart to greater things, and the *firman* was evidently quite elastic. Here is a whole temple we have overlooked : let's take the Erectheum porch ! To Elgin he wrote : " If you would come here in a large Man of War that beautiful little model of ancient art might be transported wholly to England."

But a kind Providence denied this boldest scheme, and only a column was taken from the Erectheum, together with one of the virgin cariatids. Of the Parthenon frieze the greater part was taken, almost all the metopes, fragments of figures and of architectural features, and all but a single group of the stupendous pedimental figures. All had suffered damage, and this was regrettably extreme in the case of the last named. So many were the gaps which told of a magnificence for ever gone, so mutilated were the figures which remained that poor Lusieri, the really splendid Lusieri, " dropped a brick " : he proposed their careful restoration. To-day we shudder at the

thought of such a thing, but Lusieri's plan exemplifies the æsthetic primness of the day. Canova was consulted as to the practicability of this restoring, and, to the lasting honour of that notable Italian, he refused point-blank to contemplate the "sacrilege" he called it. In a letter to Hobhouse, announcing the completion of 'Childe Harold,' Byron said, "Europe—the world—has but one Canova." And one of our leading sculptors said, "Thank God." But they both were wrong; there was Flaxman. He was approached with much the same result, and happily the project was abandoned. So I am persuaded that neither of these sculptors lived in vain; that of Canova at least it may be said with truth that his greatest work was what he left undone, and of Flaxman that the greatest effort of his genius can never so justly claim our gratitude as this refusal.

With the careful packing of the sculptures well advanced Elgin was but upon the threshold of his difficulties. Transport was costly and uncertain. Two of his transport ships were wrecked, pirates were a real and constant source of danger to unconvoyed vessels, and the rumoured presence of French squadrons *in the offing did nothing to promote enduring confidence*. Of the two ships wrecked, "Mentor," sunk in the shallows off the island of Cerigo, was the more serious loss, for she contained almost all the marbles from the Parthenon, which now became fair game for piratical enterprise. And in his efforts to impress the Vice-Consul with the urgency of salvage, and at the same time wisely to obscure the value of the cargo, Elgin was in truth between the devil and the deep. Nelson, appealed to, recommended one

Basilio Menachini, a ship-owner of Spezzia ; and Elgin agreed to nominate Basilio as Vice-Consul at Spezzia provided he display a reasonable liveliness in the salvage of the vessel and her freight. " Mentor " to-day still lies full fathom five, but it is evident that reasonable liveliness was shown, for presently we find Basilio satisfied in his ambition. As the cases of sculpture were recovered they were buried under brushwood, stones and seaweed upon the beach, there to await shipment.

Early in 1803, his term of office at the Porte now being expired, Elgin embarked for home ; and having, it seems, spent Easter in Rome, he arrived in Paris, there to meet with serious disaster. The First Consul had but a few weeks earlier promulgated his notorious decree making prisoners of war all Englishmen who were between the ages of 18 and 60 and were available. Elgin was arrested. They suffered him, I know not how, unprisoned to do much as he liked to do, so for the sake of peace he betook him to Pau and rented there a pleasantly secluded house. But the quietude of this retreat had no persistence. It was learnt in Paris that a French general who was a prisoner of war in England was just then at Newcastle-under-Lyme, and Napoleon, having no previous knowledge of this new stronghold, saw in the severity fit warrant for reprisal, and forthwith clapped Elgin into the Château-fort of Lourdes. He was released later, but he remained a prisoner for three years, during which time the work of collecting and packing up the marbles and despatching them fell almost entirely upon Lusieri, who, with what assistance he could make available, managed extremely well ; and in

October, 1804. two years after the wreck, the last of "Mentor's" freight was raised and buried on the beach of Cerigo.

Transport, however, still remained a very serious obstacle, pirates were threatening a descent on Cerigo, and financial complications harassed poor Lusieri in all his operations. Meanwhile the prisoner of Pau suffered the cruellest anxieties, having throughout two years no news from Hamilton or Lusieri, nor any knowledge of the progress of events. But through the good offices of Sir Alexander Ball he finally made touch with Nelson and asked him for a ship to carry home "Mentor's" cargo. The admiral issued the required instructions, and the shipment was effected about six months later. And here I must skip two years—years of supreme difficulties for Hamilton and Lusieri, years of unrelieved anxiety for Elgin.

Trafalgar had been lost and won, and some of the figures in this story had passed from it. And now came Talleyrand to Pau with an order of release—upon conditions. In what must have been a rather heated, if one-sided interview, Talleyrand forced Elgin to sign an undertaking to return to France if, and whenever, Bonaparte required it. On this Elgin was released, but never till the abdication of the emperor in 1814 was he relieved of his parole.

But troubles seemed to share with fabled oysters the power of rapidly augmenting aggregation. At Athens, at a stroke, complete disaster threatened more ominously than before, and speed in the shipments was made vastly more urgent. War was declared between our Russian ally and the Turks, and forthwith all the sculptures not yet embarked were

seized on by the Turkish government. And to increase poor Lusieri's woes a certain government official, one who would have been as diverting to Gilbert as he was detestable to Lusieri, descended, cunningly disguised, on Lusieri's house and had his will of it. Hamilton plotted and Elgin planned how the marbles might be got away. A man-of-war, thought Hamilton, might well assist in a military demonstration at Piræus. Perhaps a few magistrates could be pounced upon and held to ransom. No ? Then Lord Mulgrave should ask Collingwood for a ship—a big one for transport.

But not till the Turko-Russian argument was ended at the Dardanelles in January, 1809, were the worst hindrances removed and work on the shipments permitted to advance. And even then formality must be observed, and Gilbert's local government official had an eye to scenic and dramatic possibilities. Thus, in the august presence of government officials and of the Turkish primates, with very considerable circumstance and solemn rites, Lusieri's house was formally reopened and made over to him. The security of guardianship and the niceness of the restoration which this impressive pomp suggested could not have failed in reassurance, and, as one might say, the dignitaries might have got away with it, had not the back doors been found "all open, with a ladder against the garden wall, by which anyone could descend and rob with all convenience." Everything of value had been stolen.

Lord Elgin, still concerned with transport, now induced Lord Wellesley, at that time premier, to write to the Admiralty officially, asking that a special

transport be despatched to Athens. To this the Admiralty agreed, but the necessity for speed was imperfectly understood, and Lusieri, despairing at delay, chartered a vessel on his own account, saw the ship loaded with all the cases she could hold, and fell into an ecstasy at the prospect of a sailing on the morrow. But not at all. At the hour of departure instructions were received that no sailing could take place without the special permit of the Porte, and all was unloaded. Here was an *impasse*, for poor Lusieri, with no cash in hand, was asked to pay demurrage on the ship, which must not now depart without the owner's satisfaction. Finally a sailing permit was obtained, and after much difficulty the shipowner was paid, and our Consul at Smyrna contrived that a warship was despatched from there to cover operations.

We need concern ourselves no further with the troubles of our expeditionary force. The turmoil of the day is over and evening is merging into night; and moonlight throws the shadow of the transport's spars athwart the roadstead of Piræus. Now from the shore a small rowboat puts out and comes beneath the counter of the ship. A few notes plucked from a guitar, and on the still evening breaks an English melody. Wilkins, the architect member of the new Royal Academy, leads the singers; and he who leans upon the rail of the big ship, taking his leave of his beloved Greece, smiles and forgets the "horrid" freight under his feet, forgets "The Curse" that smoulders in his breast, and the party comes aboard and takes a glass of wine with the author of 'The Dream.'

Whatever critics of Lord Elgin's undertaking may have said, whatever bitterness has stirred those who have looked upon the ruined Parthenon or gazed on her relics here with censuring minds, we should bear in mind that Elgin never saw the Parthenon while still enriched with the genius of Phidias, nor could have entertained the thought that presently the Parthenon would be restored. But Hobhouse appears to have foreseen this, and he writes : " I have said nothing of the possibility of the ruins of Athens being, in the event of a revolution in favour of the Greeks, restored and put into a condition capable of resisting the ravages of decay ; for an event of that nature cannot, it strikes me, have even entered into the head of anyone who has seen Athens and the modern Athenians." So thought Hobhouse, and within a dozen years Greece had won to independence, and Hobhouse lived to see the restoration of the Parthenon begun. It must have been a sorry house-warming : but if the newly-liberated nation of the Greeks found only an eviscerated shell of that which once had been the glory of their forbears, they and we, ourselves, and all the world well know that in the fullness of time, in the ripeness of the world's æsthetic culture, wisdom and justice will not be denied.

From first to last the collection of Greek marbles cost him, said Elgin, £70,000 ; and the British Government, after most serious consideration and protracted talk, paid him just half that sum for all the work and outlay, all the pains, which in very truth had wellnigh crippled him. We may hope there was another recompense as largely sent, for there was little from his fellow countrymen. Of



criticism and abuse there never has been lack, and opinion was then, and has remained, sharply divided. On Byron's outburst we need scarcely touch. 'The Curse of Minerva,' written in the passion of the moment, hardly bears reading; 'Childe Harold' shows little less heat. Nor may we judge him here save while remembering the fury that consumed him, and by remembering the tortured soul dedicated to the cause of an emasculated nation and of a ravished land. But this we recognize—that just as Byron failed in the portrayal of everything outside his own experience, his greatest power was vividly revealed in the expression of his own emotions. There ever stretched the wide, inviting road: here was the restive steed. And Byron, in those two most furious courses, rode "hell-for-leather."

Benjamin Robert Haydon, the painter and diarist, on seeing the marbles, wrote: "I felt as if a divine truth had blazed inwardly upon my mind, and I knew that they would at last rouse the art of Europe from its slumber in darkness." "They are," cried Flaxman, "the finest things that ever came into this country!" But Dodwell execrated the "insensate barbarism which pillaged the noble works." Canova, who, like the Grand Duke Nicholas, had journeyed specially to London, said they were the best things he had ever seen; and Visconti, brought from Paris to judge them, shared this view. But Chantry and Richard Westmacott more guardedly pronounced them to be quite as good as anything else they knew. "Mediocre work!" says Richard Payne Knight; "Very fine," cries Nollekens. Wilkins, the architect, says, "Very middling," while Sir Thomas Lawrence

declares, "They are as good as anything I have seen," and Mrs. Siddons, no inconsiderable judge, thinks them magnificent.

David Wilkie was a enemy of Haydon's, and hated his opinions about the sculptures. Neither was a good linguist. Wilkie, after his meeting with Canova, said to Haydon, "He doesn't think highly of the Elgin marble." "Not think highly?" "No," answered Wilkie, "it is your damned French makes you think he said so." It was not true, but Haydon had complained that Wilkie's bad Italian had spoiled a recent dinner-table conversation with Canova.

An amusing opinion was that of Mr. Christie, the valuer, who examined 26 cases of sculpture and vases at the Customs House. They were not, he declared, worth the duty to be paid on them. They were sold for £24 the lot, and Elgin, who purchased some of them, found in one case a metope from the Parthenon. They were the property of Count Choiseul-Gouffier, one-time French Ambassador to the Porte, and the ship transporting them had been taken by us as a prize of war. Poor Choiseul-Gouffier spent many years endeavouring to trace and to regain them, but even with the help of Wellington, Nelson and Lord Bathurst he was unsuccessful. The names of Wellington and Nelson fall together here, but it is always with renewed astonishment that one recalls that these two greatest of England's military geniuses, who fought the same enemy through the self-same war, never met but once, and even then by chance. It was in the Foreign Office waiting-room, and Nelson failed to recognize the Lord of the Cool Command.

The influence radiated by the Parthenon sculptures was immediate and proved lasting. Chiefly to them, I think, is traceable that strain of classicism which has marked our literature and art since 1807. Their immediate effect may be explained in this way : the years around 1807 formed a period of unusual susceptibility, a time when sculpture at least was starved and quickly reactive to new influences. Art was rather in disgrace, and had lost the patronage she once enjoyed when it was fashionable for great men to carry greater in their train. Such tradition had lost its grip when the hold of feudalism loosened and errantry was dead, when the spirit of mechanical and scientific venture had displaced that of territorial discovery and derring-do. Art was for the many now, not for the few, and artists were more numerous and consequently poorer. The mechanization of industry—mass production as we call it now—was well afoot. Hargreaves had set up his “spinning jenny,” and Arkwright his spinning-frame improvement, Watt had his stationary engines working at Soho, and Trevithick had paved the way for railways, while telegraphy was emerging from theory to fact. All this befell within the forty years which ended with gas lighting in our London streets in 1806, and the first exhibition of the Elgin Marbles in the following year.

And meanwhile art had been very much neglected, and was now approached with an ignorance almost impossible to realize to-day. This was more particularly true of sculpture, which, since the days of the cathedral builders, had never been in very great demand. Giants we had in a declining world of

My marbles—once my bag was stored—  
 Now I must play with Elgin's lord.  
 With Theseus for a faw !

An introspective compound of pain and ridicule typical of the man who wrote ' I remember, I remember ' The lines are slight, but they serve to show how quickly still the influence reacted to the search of memory. All this was good advertisement for Athens, an advertisement which travellers sought to share by inscribing their names on the ancient buildings, as records of their prowess. Turner, in his ' Tour in the Levant,' speaks of an epigram then current in the city. This is it :

Fair Albion smiling sees her sons depart.  
 To trace the birth and nursery of art ;  
 Noble his object, glorious is his aim,  
 He comes to Athens, and he writes—his name !

Dreadful, you will say ; and so said Byron when he added this :

This modest bard, like many a bard unknown,  
 Rhymes on our names, but wisely hides his own ;  
 But yet, whoe'er he be, to say no worse.  
 His name would sound much better than his verse.

I am aware of the steepness of this literary declivity, but we reach the bottom with Du Maurier, and I am indebted to Mr. J. N. Métaxa, Greek Minister at Marseilles, for the concussion. It was a certain Mr. Alderman Lush who said the marbles were " only a set of old stones " ; and under a scathing caricature of this gentleman Du Maurier has written :

Oh Theseus, relic sublime  
Of the glory of Greece ! Thou son  
Of a god, conceived in a time  
When virtue and beauty were one !  
Here is a Philistine hound,  
The Symbol, the type of a race  
Who would sell thee for sixpence a pound  
And stick a gold calf in the place.

Well, it is not altogether the doggerel it appears, for it at least contains a little of this ponderable truth—that for only the few, even of those who seriously study art, have these segregated fragments of a noble building any real interest. We have had the marbles now for six score years, and even now can we say we understand them ? We might as reasonably ask, do we understand Shakespeare ? I think that only genius is sometimes able to understand the work of genius. Six score years, and one wonders if this so-called fount of inspiration has not failed us. Mrs. Hemans tells what was expected of them. In her ‘Modern Greece’ she exclaims :

And who can tell how pure, how bright a flame,  
Caught from these models, may illumine the west ?  
What British Angelo may rise to fame,  
On the free isle what beams of art may rest ?

But this is to mistake the works of Genius for her very self ; it is to think that if we make copies of these works the very soul of Phidias will enter into us ; it is to suggest that one may just shake down another apple and claim the discovery of the laws of gravity. These works of Greece’s genius cannot conceive a British or any other Angelo ; they are not a cause but an effect, and Genius, the cause, is as

intractable as she is invulnerable. Shelley tells very beautifully how Genius cannot be reached or captured through her own creations, which perish, indeed, while she eternally survives. In 'Greece to Slavery' he says :

But Greece and her foundations are  
Built below the tide of war,  
Based on the chrystalline sea  
Of thought and its eternity.

No. Genius cannot be distilled from her own works. This genius is not in Greece's sculptures nor in her writings, but in the mental qualities and processes which evolved them. And likely, if we seek her, we shall find that she, like woman or like sleep, is ever shyest when most ardently pursued. Where, then, shall we look for inspiration, where find this genius ? I am unwilling to be bold, but I believe that through humility and patient effort and through faith—faith in *something*—and with a soul superior to the hurts of an unkind world genius may be sought without presumption. Shelley again says it in 'Prometheus Unbound,' says it most splendidly in words which we may wish especially to dwell on in such days as these :

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite ;  
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night ;  
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent ;  
To love, and bear ; to hope till Hope creates  
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates ;  
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent ;  
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be  
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free ;  
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

There lies the secret.

The genius of Greece may never be recaptured from her works or from her soil, by either ourselves or those who in after years people her hills, for genius is ever born of Nature's most capricious moments. Nor should we here in England hope to coax genius from our granite tors or our lush meadows; for genius owns no nationality nor any realm or land, but is the child of Chance, of Opportunity, of Pain and Fortitude—of a conjunction of fortuitous circumstances which never may be managed or constrained. Genius moves on; her presence is not easy to discover, her identity impossible to trace. So it has ever been and still must be. Who shall discern the mightiness of Grecian art in the military genius of Rome, or recognize in England's greatest literary age the pilgrim excellence of Italy's artistic renaissance?

*[The author is indebted to Mr. A. Hamilton Smith's "Lord Elgin and His Collection" ('Journal of Hellenic Studies') for many facts and circumstances contained in this essay]*

# THE LONDON COFFEE-HOUSES AND THE BEGINNINGS OF LLOYD'S.

BY WARREN R. DAWSON, F.R.S.L.

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COFFEE-HOUSES came into existence in England in the middle of the seventeenth century and were destined to play a conspicuous part in the social life of the country. From coffee-houses many notable institutions have had their origin, such as Lloyd's, the Baltic, the Westminster and Phoenix Fire Offices and some of the West End clubs. From homely meetings at coffee-houses many great movements have begun.

Before entering upon the main subject of this paper—the London coffee-houses in general, and Lloyd's in particular—a few words may be said by way of introduction as to the history of coffee. The coffee of commerce is obtained from a Rubiaceae tree or shrub, the *Coffea arabica* of botanists. Although the specific name of the plant suggests an association with Arabia, coffee is not a native of that country, but was introduced, according to Lane, towards the end of the fifteenth century.\* The tree is essentially African in origin and is indigenous to Abyssinia, and its use there as an alimentary article is recorded in the fifteenth century, but according

\* E. W. Lane, 'Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians,' 1846, i., p. 36.



to tradition it had been in use from time immemorial. The Abyssinians long kept the value of coffee a secret, for it was quite unknown to the peoples of neighbouring countries. There are legendary accounts of how its properties first came to be recognized, amongst which is the well-known story that a flock of sheep, browsing amongst the wild shrubs, ate the leaves and berries of the coffee-plant and as a result became stimulated, elated and restless at night. This legend is somewhat analogous to Charles Lamb's 'Dissertation on Roast Pig,' but there is no doubt that the physiological action of coffee in promoting wakefulness and dissipating drowsiness was recognized at an early date, and the Mahommedans who traded with Abyssinia introduced the plant into Arabia and took the greatest advantage of the beverage prepared from the berries as a stimulant and antisoporific in their prolonged religious devotions. The orthodox priests of Islam condemned its use for such purposes, and indeed for all purposes, on the ground that coffee was believed by them to be an intoxicant and as such was prohibited by the Koran.\* The prohibition, however, was so little observed and respected that coffee became the most popular drink amongst the Arabian Mahommedans both in religious and civil life, and its use rapidly spread throughout the Mohommedan countries of the Near East, and had become general before the end of the sixteenth century. The wider appreciation of coffee as a beverage led to the establishment, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, of definite houses for its

\* 'Al Koran,' ii, p. 216; George Sale, 'The Koran' (N.D.), p. 23; E. W. Lane, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

retail sale, and thus the coffee-house came into existence, first at Constantinople\* and soon after at Venice and elsewhere.

In 1621 Burton speaks of the "Turks in their coffee-houses which much resemble our taverns,"† and an interesting reference to coffee-houses is made by Bacon in his '*Sylva Sylvarum*,' upon which he was engaged at the time of his death (1626) :

They have in Turkey a drink called Coffee, made of a Berry of the same name, as Black as Soot, and of a Strong Sent, but not aromatical ; which they take beaten in Poudre, in Water, as Hot as they can Drink it : and they take it, and sit at it in the Coffee Houses, which are like our Taverns. The Drink comforteth the Brain, and Heart, and helpeth Digestion.

The first person to make use of coffee as a beverage in England appears to have been Nathaniel Canopius, a native of Crete, who, when at Balliol College, Oxford, made coffee for his own consumption.‡ John Evelyn, in his '*Memoirs*,' says "there came in my time to the College one Nathaniel Canopios, out of Greece . . . He was the first I ever saw drink coffee, which custom came not into England till thirty years after." Evelyn went to Oxford in 1637, and his memory was evidently at fault as to dates, for coffee was actually sold to the public in Oxford in 1650. Anthony à Wood relates that—

Jacob, a Jew, opened a coffee-house at the Angel in the Parish of St. Peter in the East, Oxon, and there it was by

\* George Sandys, '*Relation of a Journey Begun A.D. 1610*' (1615), i, p. 66.

† '*Anatomy of Melancholy*,' Pt. I, §2.

‡ Canopius was expelled from Oxford during the troubles of 1684. He was afterwards Bishop of Smyrna.

some, who delighted in noveltie, drank. In 1654, Cirques Jobson, a Jew and Jacobite, borne near Mount Libanus, sold coffey in Oxon; and in 1655, Arch. Tillyard, apothecary, sold Coffey publicly in his house against All Souls College. This coffey-house continued till his majesties returne and after, and then they became more frequent, and had an excise set upon coffey.\*

The first coffee-house in England of which there is any record is accordingly that of Jacob at Oxford in 1650. The taste for coffee in Oxford had grown out of Canopius's favourite beverage, and Jacob, the first coffee-man in England, was sharp enough to realize that the whim of an individual might be successfully exploited commercially. Two years later (in 1625), the first London coffee-house opened its doors. A Turkey merchant trading in the Levant, Edwards by name, had brought to England a Ragusan servant, a young man named Pasqua Rosee, who prepared coffee for his master every morning. Edwards's new and exotic beverage attracted an inconvenient number of callers to his house, and their attentions became so overwhelming that he induced his servant to set up an establishment especially for the sale of coffee, and thus came into existence the first London coffee-house, which was opened under the sign of Rosee's Head in St. Michael's Alley, Cornhill, close to the Royal Exchange.† Rosee issued a broadsheet advertising his wares, and the document, although it has been printed before, is of sufficient

\* 'Athenae Oxonienses' (1691), ii, p. 638.

† R. Chambers, 'The Book of Days' (1862), i, p. 179; John Timbs, 'Clubs and Club Life of London' (1899), p. 269; Edward Forbes Robinson, 'Early History of Coffee Houses in England' (1893), pp. 65, 85. The name Pasqua Ro-ee is probably an attempted phonetic spelling of Pascual Rossi.

interest to deserve transcription in full. It reads as follows :

The Vertue of the Coffee Drink

First made and publickly sold in England by Pasqua Rosee

The grain or berry called coffee, groweth upon little trees only in the deserts of Arabia. It is brought from thence, and drunk generally throughout all the Grand Seignour's dominions. It is a simple, innocent thing, composed into a drink, by being dried in an oven, and ground to powder, and boiled up with spring water, and about half a pint of it to be drunk fasting an hour before, and not eating an hour after, and to be taken as hot as possibly can be endured : the which will never fetch the skin off the mouth, or raise any blisters by reason of that heat.

The Turk's drink at meals and other times is usually water, and their diet consists much of fruit ; the crudities whereof are very much corrected by this drink.

The quality of this drink is cold and dry ; and though it be a drier, yet it neither heats nor inflames more than hot posset. It so incloseth the orifice of the stomach, and fortifies the heat within, that it is very good to help digestion ; and therefore of great use to be taken about three or four o'clock after noon, as well as in the morning. It much quickens the spirits, and makes the heart lightsome ; it is good against sore eyes, and the better if you hold your head over it and take in the steam that way. It suppresseth fumes exceedingly, and therefore is good against the head-ache, and will very much stop any defluxion of rheums that distill from the head upon the stomach, and so prevent and help consumptions and the cough of the lungs.

It is excellent to prevent and cure the dropsy, gout, and scurvy. It is known by experience to be better than any other drying drink for people in years, or children that have any running humours upon them, as the king's evil, etc. It is a most excellent remedy against the spleen, hypochondriac winds, and the like. It will prevent drowsiness, and make one fit for business, if one have occasion to watch,

and therefore you are not to drink of it after supper, unless you intend to be watchful, for it will hinder sleep for three or four hours.

It is observed that in Turkey, where this is generally drunk, that they are not troubled with the stone, gout, dropsy or scurvy, and that their skins are exceeding clear and white. It is neither laxative nor restraining.

Made and sold in St. Michael's-alley in Cornhill, by Pasqua Rosee, at the sign of his own head.

In this remarkable production may be clearly discerned the hand of the vendor of quack-medicines—an expert in such effusions. It closely resembles, both in substance and style, the handbills that were composed and circulated by these pseudo-practitioners in praise of their pills, syrups and ointments. It gives great prominence to the real or supposed medicinal virtues of coffee, a point to which Bacon also refers.\* Similar virtues were claimed for tea, which was first sold at Garraway's Coffee-house as “a cure for all disorders.”

\* To compare with this effusion, I quote the remarks of Dr. Robert James (the friend of Samuel Johnson, and the inventor of “Dr. James's Powders”; born 1703, died 1776) concerning coffee. These remarks represent medical opinion in the middle of the eighteenth century: “Coffee is esteemed efficacious for the Cure and Prevention of Comatous Disorders, arising from Phlegm, or a too viscid Blood; and by its Chylification and Sanguification increases the Quantity of the Animal Spirits, and repairs the Loss of them arising from praeternatural Watching Spirits, and repairs the Loss of them arising from praeternatural Watchings. By its volatile Salts it removes Obstructions of the Brain, dries up its superfluous Moisture, and consequently restores a due Degree of Elasticity to its Membranes and Vessels. It is an infallible Secret for removing that Species of Headach, which, in consequence of a bad Digestion, arises some Hours after Dinner. Coffee, in general, seems more proper for Persons of Phlegmatic Constitutions, than for Patients of Choleric Habits. In most Disorders of the Head, such as Cephalalgia, Vertigo, Lethargy and Catarrh, when the Habit is plethoric, the Constitution cold, the Blood aqueous, the Brain too moist, and the Motion of the Spirits too slow and languid, Coffee is of great Advantage” etc. ‘*Pharmacopœia Universalis*,’ 2nd ed. (1752), p. 191; and cf. Nicolas Lemery, ‘*Traité des Drogues Simples*,’ 3rd ed. (Paris, 1723), p. 154.

That Pasqua Rosee's venture was an immediate success is quite evident from the rapid rise of numerous competitors.\* Coffee-drinking became a fashion, and coffee-houses were established in great numbers in the City and in the Liberties. Their rise was also probably fostered by the times—they were a useful set-off against the taverns and ale-houses which for a time at least lost favour in Puritan England. If the original motive of the customers had been to benefit their health by taking advantage of the new and palatable medicine thus made so easily available to them, the medicinal aspect of coffee-houses soon became superseded by the social, and coffee-houses became not spas but places of resort and entertainment. The proprietor of the Turk's Head, a well-known coffee-house in Change Alley, advertised dry coffee for sale. The advertisement appeared in several successive issues of the *Intelligencer* in 1662 :

At the coffee-house in Exchange-alley, is sold by retail the right coffee-powder from 4s. to 6s. 8d. per pound, as in goodness; (*i. e.* according to quality); that pounded in a mortar at 2s. 6d. per pound: also that termed the East India berry at 18d. per pound: and that termed the right Turkie berry well garbled at 3s. per pound, the ungarbled for lesse, with directions gratis how to make and use the same. . . . Further, all Gentlemen that are customers and acquaintance are (the next New-year's day) invited at the sign of the Great Turke at the new coffee-house in Exchange-alley, where coffee will be on free-cost.†

\* The second London Coffee House appears to have been The Rainbow in Fleet Street, also opened in 1652.

† *Intelligencer*, December 22nd-29th, 1662. The "East India berry" is not Indian Coffee, for the plant had not at this time been introduced into India. Probably coffee imported by the East India Company from its agents in the Near East is meant.

Coffee, although a popular beverage, was not without its opponents, and many broadsides and pamphlets were issued full of invective against what the authors regarded as a dangerous drug, a national menace and a social nuisance. In 1657, for instance, James Farr, the proprietor of the famous Rainbow Coffee House in Fleet Street, was prosecuted for creating a public nuisance by keeping a coffee-house, and Hatton, the garrulous author of the 'New View of London,' published in 1708, states that there were then "near 3000 such nuisances." This is certainly a vague exaggeration and must have included many minor establishments that were not properly coffee-houses at all, but during the reign of Charles II, coffee-houses were certainly very numerous, probably some two or three hundred at least in London, and it is known that in the reign of Queen Anne there were five hundred or more in London alone.\*

A writer in the *National Review* (No. 8, 1883) also exaggerates when he says "Before 1715 the number of coffee-houses in London was reckoned at two thousand." In the middle of the eighteenth century, in the reign of George II, when the population of London was still well under a million, there were in the City, Liberties and out-parishes 551 coffee-houses, 447 taverns and nearly 600 ale-houses, not counting 200 inns. It would seem that the number of coffee-houses in London remained fairly constantly in the neighbourhood of 500, more or less.

It is needless to dwell upon the great part played by coffee-houses in the social life of England, and

\* John Ashton, 'Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne' (1882), ii pp. 262-268.

especially of London, from the time of the Restoration till well into the nineteenth century, for this has already been described by many able writers. Although coffee-houses, like taverns, were public establishments, open to all comers, specialization began to assert itself at an early period. It is quite natural that men of similar pursuits and tastes should, like birds of a feather, flock together in establishments conveniently near their usual haunts, and where the company was congenial to themselves and their cronies. The coffee-houses in the neighbourhood of Westminster were filled with Members of Parliament and Government officials, and those of a particular party or group tended to segregate themselves in certain specific houses. Coffee-houses in the environs of Covent Garden were haunted by artists, wits and poets\*; those on the north side of Fleet Street by scholars and literary men,† and those on the south side, near the Inns of Court, by barristers and their clerks. The Whitehall coffee-houses attracted courtiers and men of fashion, while those in the City were frequented by merchants and bankers. The merchants themselves broke into groups according to their particular interests, and thus bankers, bill-brokers, shippers, East India merchants and others all had their own chosen places of resort.

In 1665 appeared a long doggerel rhyme entitled 'The Character of a Coffee House. By an Eye and Ear Witness.' From this lengthy effusion I will make a short quotation :

\* The most notable were Will's, Button's and the Bedford.

† Especially the Grecian Coffee House, which took its name from the fact that its founder was a Greek, Constantinos by name.



Of all some and all conditions,  
 Even Vintners, Surgeons and Physicians,  
 The Blind, the Deaf, and aged Cripple,  
 Do here resort, and coffee tipple.

It is curious to observe that the keepers of taverns, a much older business than that of the coffee-men, were so lacking in foresight as to allow new and formidable rivals to spring up in every street. The early prejudice against coffee, and the inherent conservatism of London citizens are perhaps the reasons why the tavern-keepers did not begin to sell coffee and tea till long after their introduction.\* While the coffee-houses dispensed but a single beverage, or at most but coffee, tea, cocoa and sherbet, the tavern-keepers imagined that they had not much to fear, but so soon as coffee-houses had become places of resort, their proprietors began to provide other entertainment for their customers, either in an increased range of catering or by other means. Many of the coffee-houses soon became equivalent to taverns, and they offered also additional advantages which the taverns lacked. The coffee-houses, too, were almost without exception, agents for the sale of pills, syrups, powders, elixirs and the hundred-and-one other quack medicines and nostrums that were so popular and so firmly believed in by all classes of the population in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Many of the houses were regularly visited by quack doctors, who made their rounds at specified hours to interview patients. Thus, at the close of the seventeenth

\* Arabia was for a long time the sole source of the supply of coffee. At the end of the seventeenth century, successful attempts were made to introduce the plant into other tropical regions. See J. Crawford, 'Trans. of the Ethnological Society,' New Series, vii (1869), p. 198.

century a well-known quack named Thomas Smith, of King Street, Westminster, advertised as follows :

I am to be spoken with till 8 in the morning and 6 at night at Home, and every day at these Coffee-houses following, morning and evening. The Rainbow at Fleet-bridge and at Richards, Nandos, Temple, Mannering's, The Grecian and Brown's, all in Fleet Street near the Temple. From 1 to 4, at Grigby's in Threadneedle-street, the backside of the Royal Exchange, or at the Lisbon Coffee-house next door and at the Amsterdam Coffee-house, the London Coffee-house by the Antwerp Tavern, and each evening going home I call at the Coffee-houses above, Toms and Wills near Covent Garden, Squire's in Fullers Rents, Holborne, Ormonde-street at Mr. Man's, the Royal Coffee-house near Whitehall, Mrs. Wells under Scotland Yard Gate, Alice's, Waghorn's and all the Parliament Coffee-houses all adjoining to the Parliament House, where I am ready to serve any gentleman or lady.\*

One wonders when this ubiquitous practitioner found time to eat and sleep, but competition in his line of business was very keen. An early reference to Lloyd's occurs in a handbill issued in 1692. Edward Lloyd, as will presently be seen, had just moved his establishment from Tower Street to Lombard Street, and he appears to have been approached by one Mogson with a view to making the newly-opened premises a depot for the sale of Mogson's miraculous pills, for which great virtues were claimed. Mogson, however, was attacked by a Mrs. Katherine Anderson, who alleged that Mogson's preparations were spurious imitations of her own. The outraged lady issued a leaflet full of the most acrimonious invective against her rival, from which the following is an excerpt :

Nay, so little truth is in his assertions, that in March

\* C. J. S. Thompson, 'The Quacks of Old London' (1928), p. 268.

last, he himself did meet with me at Mr. Lloyd's Coffee-house in Lombard Street, and desired him to vend my pills there, but since then he hath trick'd him and me both, which can and may perhaps be made appear in as publick a manner, as he hath made himself a Lyar to the view of the World, &c

Even if Edward Lloyd, after hearing this wrangle of rivals, did not continue to sell the Anderson-Mogson pills, it is probable that his house, like those of all his contemporaries, was a depot for the sale of many other quack preparations.

After the Restoration, the rapid multiplication of coffee-houses necessitated some form of control, and it became necessary to license them. Coffee-men were licensed as victuallers, and under a Statute of 1663 at the Quarter Sessions, licenses were granted to persons keeping houses for the retail sale of "Coffee, Choclet, Sherbett or Tea." When the popularity of coffee-houses as places of resort was at its height, Charles II saw in these gatherings of persons potential dangers and facilities for conspiracy and intrigue. Accordingly he decided to suppress and abolish coffee-houses altogether, and on December 20th, 1675, he issued a "Proclamation for the Suppression of Coffee Houses."\* The preamble reads as follows :

Whereas it is most apparent, that the multitude of Coffee-houses of late years set up and kept within this kingdom . . . and the great resort of idle and disaffected persons to them, have produced very evil and dangerous effects ; as well for that many Tradesmen and others, do therein mispend much of their time, which might and probably would otherwise be imployed in and about their Lawfull Callings and Affairs ; but also, for that in such Houses and

\* State Papers, Domestic, Carolus II, Proclamations, iii, p. 343

by occasion of the meetings of such persons therein, divers False, Malitious, and Scandalous Reports are devised and spread abroad, to the Defamation of His Majestys Government, and to the Disturbance of the Peace and Quiet of this Realm; His Majesty hath thought it fit and necessary, that the said Coffee-houses be (for the future) Put down and Suppressed.

The proclamation goes on to charge the licensing authorities forthwith to recall and revoke all existing licenses and to refrain from granting new ones, and the measure was to take effect on the 10th day of January following. This measure would have brought great hardship upon hundreds of traders whose capital had been sunk in the establishment of premises and who held large stocks of coffee and tea, and as only three weeks' interval was allowed between the date of the proclamation and its enforcement, there was little enough time in which to take action. The coffee-men, however, acted with the greatest promptitude and laid a petition before the king presenting their case, and on January 8th, 1675/6, two days before the operative date of the proclamation of December 20th, a second proclamation was issued postponing the date of suppression for six months.\* In return for this act of clemency, granted by the King "out of his Royal Compassion," the coffee-men were required to take the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy and to enter into recognizances in the sum of £500 each for their good behaviour. In April, 1676, twenty-four London "coffeesellers" appeared at the quarter sessions and having satisfied the justices, secured the extension of their licenses

\* Stato Papers, Domestic, Carolus II, Proclamations, iii, p. 345.

for six months.\* In the list are some well-known names, including Thomas Garraway. The intended effect of the second proclamation was merely to postpone the total suppression of coffee-houses from January 10th to June 24th, but no such ultimate suppression is recorded in history. By an Order in Council, dated July 21st. 1676,† the justices were authorized to extend existing licenses for a further six months from June 24th, and thereafter we hear no more of the matter. In the reign of William and Mary, complaints were made of seditious talk in certain coffee-houses, and the Lord Mayor was admonished to keep a special watch on the houses in question and to prosecute the proprietors if necessary, but no action was actually taken.‡ The proclamations of Charles II. although never revoked, became a dead letter; indeed the Privy Council seems to have felt some doubts as to whether licenses could properly be revoked, and legal opinion was taken on the matter.§ The real reason for the dropping of Charles's proposed suppression of coffee-houses was probably a financial one. In the interval between January and June, it must have been represented to the King that such a suppression would not only have brought ruin upon hundreds of honest traders and have caused the greatest discontent and resentment amongst their innumerable customers who were already none too well disposed towards the King and the Government, but a far

\* Sessions Records, Guildhall Record Department.

† State Papers, Domestic, Carolus II, 383, No. 132.

‡ State Papers, William & Mary, Home Secretary's Letter Book, 3, 18; Warrant Book, 34, 255 (1689 and 1691).

§ State Papers, Domestic, Carolus II, 378, Nos. 40 and 48.

more important result would have been the very considerable loss of revenue to the Exchequer through the cessation of the excise upon tea and coffee.\* Charles was notoriously pressed for money, and the latter argument would alone have been sufficient to convince him of the folly of enforcing the total suppression of coffee-houses. Besides this, there was really no definite evidence that the coffee-houses generally were hot-beds of sedition. Some of the lords of the council are said to have circulated libels against the court from John's Coffee House in 1675,† but it was manifestly unfair to penalize the whole trade because of the misdemeanours of the proprietors of one or two houses. Had sedition been intended, it could equally well have been nurtured in taverns and ale-houses, which were not affected by the proclamations. It is true that in their petition the coffee-men are represented as "confessing their former Miscarriages and Abuses committed in such Coffee Houses and expressing their true sorrow for the same," but no great importance can be attached to these words. As the promptest action was needful to draw up and present the petition in the very short space of time available, it is probable that the legal advisers of the petitioners realized that it would be wiser to admit the allegations as a matter of form than to risk the loss of time in making an effort to resist or disprove them.

And so, in spite of this abortive attempt to put an end to their existence for ever, the coffee-houses

\* In 1660, a duty of 4d. was laid upon every gallon of coffee made and sold (12 Car. II, Cap. 24).

† Arthur Bryant, 'King Charles II' (1932), p. 246.

continued their activity. and a few years later new ones were established, and the number, which had been greatly diminished by the plague and the fire, soon reached its former level. Relieved once more from anxiety, the scholars and pedants continued their learned discussions at the Grecian Coffee House in Devereux Court; courtiers and dandies arranged their wigs and adjusted their swords in the Royal at Whitehall; at Will's, in Covent Garden, Dryden was to be found day after day surrounded by poets and wits; medical men forgathered at Child's in St. Paul's Churchyard, conveniently near the College of Physicians, and merchants thronged in the Jerusalem, Garraway's, the Turk's Head\* and the many other coffee-houses in the City.

In the meantime, however, London had, in the year 1665, been doomed to suffer a disaster in the Great Plague. Commerce was long at a standstill, and many merchants were ruined. In the following year, before the City had had time to recover, came the Great Fire. The first of these terrible misfortunes had carried off countless human lives; the second consumed the property of the survivors. Fire insurance was unknown, and the loss completed the tale of ruin begun by the plague. Most of the retail trade of the city migrated westwards, much of it never to return. The centre of gravity of the financial world shifted eastwards, and settled in the small undamaged area that lay between Leadenhall Street

\* There were several Turk's Head Coffee Houses. That in the City was in 'Change Alley (opened in 1662); another was in Gerrard Street (originally in Greek Street), Soho: a third, in the Strand, was frequented by Dr. Johnson, a fourth was in Palace Yard, Westminster, and a fifth near Gray's Inn.

and the Tower. Probably most of the original City coffee-houses were extinguished for ever by the Fire: their proprietors, uninsured, had lost their all, and it is likely that but few of them were in a position to acquire premises in the undamaged areas owing to the immediate and extravagant increase in rents. Pepys has given us more than one glimpse of the outrageous profiteering by the landlords of houses that the fire had left habitable. The Royal Exchange was reduced to a heap of blackened ruins, and although the merchants used Gresham House as a temporary meeting-place, much of the business formerly carried on in its environs was perforce transferred to the coffee-houses that lay beyond the area of destruction. London was not rebuilt in a day: labour and money were scarce, and we have many indications in the writings of contemporaries, of the very protracted nature of London's reconstruction. Although the Royal Exchange had been quickly rebuilt and was reopened in 1669, it is probable that but little business was done there, and that the surrounding area was almost uninhabited for some years after. The protracted nature of the reconstruction is also indicated to some extent by the dates of the reopening of the parish churches. Eighty-four City churches had perished in the fire, and up to 1671 not one had been replaced. This fact must be borne in mind in estimating the progress of the repopulation of the City as a whole, for until the parochial life of London had been fully restored it is probable that few residents as yet occupied the rebuilt houses. Contemporary witnesses have testified that whole rows of the new houses



stood tenantless, five, ten and even twenty years after the fire. There was no great inducement for the impoverished citizens to hurry back to a City that could scarcely support them. Few of them could afford either the enhanced rents of old premises that had been spared by the flames or the high rents demanded for new houses. The new houses, built of brick, were of course greatly superior to their predecessors and the consequent rise in rents was universal. The rebuilding of the Churches seems to mark the beginnings of repopulation on anything like an extensive scale. To take a few instances of churches near the Royal Exchange, it is to be noted that St. Michael, Cornhill, was the first to be completed and was opened in 1672: St. Stephen, Walbrook, followed in 1679: St. Peter-upon-Cornhill in 1681: St. Mary, Abchurch, in 1686: St. Edmund, Lombard Street, in 1690. Lombard Street with its adjoining courts and alleys, the centre of the banking and mercantile interests of the City, were probably in a very incomplete and sparsely inhabited state until the late 'eighties of the seventeenth century and the reopening of the Church of St. Edmund the Martyr in 1690 probably marks approximately the completion of the restoration and repopulation of that area, although the Church of All Hallows, at the eastern end of Lombard Street, was not ready for use until four years later.

The eastern end of the City, therefore, remained the centre of the business world for a far longer period than is generally supposed. In this area there were, of course, coffee houses that had been established before the fire, and these for some years

after must have pushed a thriving trade. As the rebuilding of London progressed, new coffee-houses came into existence after the embargo placed upon them in 1675-6 had fallen into abeyance. One of these new establishments was that of Edward Lloyd.

The actual date of the establishment of Lloyd's Coffee House has hitherto been unknown, but I propose to lay before you some data which will allow us to set this date within narrow limits. It is known from the earliest reference to Lloyd's Coffee House as yet discovered in print, that is to say, from an advertisement in the *London Gazette* of February 18th-21st, 1688-9, that the house was situated in Tower Street.\* The historians of Lloyd's have found some references to Edward Lloyd's family in the registers of the Church of All Hallows, Barking, dated in 1680 and 1681,† and from this fact it has always been tacitly assumed that Lloyd's Coffee-House stood within that parish. The historians, however, overlooked the fact that only the eastern end of Tower Street lies in All Hallows' parish: the greater part of it is in the adjoining parish of St. Dunstan-in-the-East. It has always struck me as unlikely that Lloyd's Coffee House, founded as it must have been at a time when the rebuilding of the City had made great progress, would have been newly established in a remote parish which was then almost the eastern limit of London. Beyond lay

\* I have searched the old newspapers in the Burney Collection at the British Museum for some years prior to 1688, but without finding the name of Lloyd's.

Tower Street is now called Great Tower Street.

† Charles Wright and C. Ernest Fayle, 'History of Lloyd's' (1928), p. 12.

the Tower, a little community apart, and a line of straggling waterside villages, such as Wapping and Limehouse, with open fields between them. Struck with the idea that the western end of Tower Street, which adjoins Eastcheap, was a much more likely locus for a coffee-house, I searched the registers of St. Dunstan's parish, kindly placed at my disposal by the rector, the Rev. A. G. B. West, and I there found indications that supported my hypothesis, and proved that Lloyd did indeed reside in that parish. From the registers of All Hallows we learn that Edward Lloyd buried a son, Edward, in September, 1680. As the baptism of that son, who could only have been an infant, is not recorded in All Hallows' register, nor is the marriage of Edward Lloyd with his wife Abigail, it is clear that he had in 1680 recently come into the parish from elsewhere, he being then a married man with at least one son, and possibly also a daughter.\* A daughter, Mary, and a son, Hugh, were baptized at All Hallows on November 29th, 1680, and December 5th, 1681. respectively, and thereafter no mention is made of Lloyd's family in All Hallows registers. Where was he, then, between 1681 and the earliest mention (in print) of his coffee-house in 1688-9? I think we can account for his movements to some extent.

We know that Edward Lloyd moved to Lombard Street at Christmas, 1691, and that other children were born to him after that date. In an age of large families, it seemed to me extremely unlikely that, having had at least three children up to 1681,

\* A daughter, "Elinor," is mentioned in Edward Lloyd's will, but I have not been able to find the register of her baptism.

ten years would pass without further additions to his family. St. Dunstan's registers show that there was, indeed, no decline in the fertility of the Lloyd family. As we have seen, Lloyd's son Hugh was baptized at All Hallows on December 5th, 1681. That child died in infancy, and was buried, not at All Hallows, but at St. Dunstan's, in the burial register of which is the entry, dated October 9th, 1682. Clearly, then, Edward Lloyd had removed from the parish of All Hallows into that of St. Dunstan between December 5th, 1681, and October 9th, 1682. That he remained in the latter parish subsequent entries in the registers clearly demonstrate. On August 19th, 1683, another son, Laynde (or Loyne) was baptized. This child died young and was buried on August 9th, 1685. In the meantime another son, Simon, was born, and was baptized on March 18th, 1684-5. This child also died in infancy, and was buried on July 31st following. In 1687 a daughter, Abigail, was baptized on the 14th, and buried on the 31st, of July. A second Abigail was baptized on February 16th, 1689-90. This child survived, and was subsequently married. These entries show clearly that Edward Lloyd continued to reside in St. Dunstan's parish for ten years.

Nor can there be any doubt as to the identity of the children whose baptisms and deaths are recorded in St. Dunstan's registers, for they are all stated to be the sons (or daughters) of Edward and Abigail Lloyd.\*

The vestry minutes of St. Dunstan's parish make

\* The name Abigail is variously spelt in the registers: Abigale, Arbigall, etc.

no reference to Edward Lloyd, and I consequently sought further information in the civic records of the Guildhall.\* My first endeavour was to find, if possible, the record of the license granted to Edward Lloyd, for coffee-house-keepers had to be licensed, as we have already noted, as Victuallers. In Edward Lloyd's time, licenses were granted by the Aldermen of the respective Wards, who, as Justices of the Peace, were competent to issue them. The Aldermen sent to the Lord Mayor an annual return (for the year ending March 24th) of licenses granted or renewed by them. The Ward Presentments also contained a list of victuallers who had been duly licensed. The presentment for Tower Ward for the year 1682 is extant, but its list of Victuallers does not contain the name of Edward Lloyd. His name is likewise absent from the Alderman's return for the year 1684-5. The returns for Tower Ward for the years 1685-6 and 1686-7 are unfortunately missing, but happily those for the next two years are extant.† In the Alderman's return dated March 7th, 1687-8, we find, in the parish of St. Dunstan-in-the-East, the entry "Edward Lloyd fframework knitter"‡ and his two sureties (as required by law), "Nicholas Allthorpe, fletcher," and "William Innes, plaisterer." These men were victuallers, and they were mutually 4th, 10s for each other. In the return dated March 1688-9, Lloyd's name again occurs, and his

\* I hereby  
Keeper of the  
me facilities for, gratefully acknowledge the courtesy of Mr. A. H. Thomas,

† Guildhall Records, and of his assistant, Mr. E. P. Jones, in allowing

‡ It was previous research in the City archives.  
member of the Records; file 'Returns of Victuallers 1680-1690.'

is known, from Edward Lloyd's will, that he was a  
mework-Knitters' Company.

sureties are two other victuallers, "John Otter, draper," and "John Griffith, cloth worker," who again mutually guarantee one another. From these documents the date of the establishment of Lloyd's Coffee House can be narrowed down to the years 1685-6 and 1686-7. If his name did not occur in one of the two missing lists, the actual date of establishment was 1687-8.\*

The Ward assessments for taxation give valuable data, but, as regards Tower Ward, they are unfortunately missing between the years 1680 and 1692. Had these been extant, the situation of the house, the date of its establishment and particulars of all the inmates would have been made known to us. In the absence of these documents, the only hope that now remains for the establishment of Lloyd's Coffee House is a contemporary letter or diary as yet undiscovered.

The foregoing records, parochial and civic, incomplete as they are, establish quite clearly that Edward Lloyd resided in St. Dunstan's parish from 1681-2, and that he became a license-holder in 1686 or 1687. It is clear that during his brief sojourn in All Hallows' parish in 1680-81 and the first years of his residence in that of St. Dunstan, he was not a proprietor, but was probably a waiter in the service of another coffee-man. He was born about 1648, for in the allegation for the license for his second marriage in 1698, his age is stated to be then about fifty years. Consequently when in 1686 or 1687 he found himself in a position to be the licensee of a coffee-house, he

\* The Alderman of Tower Ward from 1680 to 1687 was Sir John Chapman, Mercer, who was Lord Mayor in 1688, and died on May 7th, 1737.

was about 38 years of age. Lloyd must have been possessed of a little property, for in an assessment made in November. 1680, he appears as the owner as well as the tenant of a house in Red Cross Alley. The house was certainly a very small one, for the tax payable thereon was only one shilling, *i. e.* 8*d.* as landlord. and 4*d.* as tenant.\* Red Cross Alley, afterwards called Red Cross Court, was a little turning off Tower Street, between Mark Lane and Seething Lane, immediately opposite All Hallows' Church. This court, together with the southern end of Seething Lane was swept away when Byward Street was made. Edward Lloyd's house was a stone's-throw from that of Samuel Pepys. The suggestion that he was previously in the service of another coffee-man is supported by the fact that he would be unlikely to embark upon the enterprise of proprietorship without previous knowledge and experience of the trade, and also by the fact that it is well known that the proprietors of many famous coffee-houses had previously been the head-waiters of other houses. It is quite possible, of course, that Lloyd did not found a new house. He may have taken over the lease and goodwill of one that was already in existence, but the fact that he called it by his own name (as the *London Gazette* advertisement of 1688-9 attests) rather favours the probability of a new establishment. In any case it can now be stated that the coffee-house of Edward Lloyd, specifically so-called, dates from 1686 or 1687, and the venerable parish

\* Guildhall Records: Tower Ward; an Assessment under an Act for Disbanding the Army. Precept dated August 10th, 1680; return dated November 1st, 1680. (Fo 14 verso) As already mentioned, the assessment returns for subsequent years are missing

of St. Dunstan-in-the-East must claim the credit of having been the first home of Lloyd's.

With the completion of the Churches, the Companies' Halls and other public or semi-public buildings, the residents gradually returned, and with them the demand for all the old conveniences and amenities of their former life. The coffee-houses had acquired so important a place both in the social and the commercial life of London that they too rose from the ashes with renewed vigour, and great numbers of them sprang up in the streets and courts near the Royal Exchange. Competition between them became keen: they had to begin once more to attract distinctive classes of customers. Just as a new drink, coffee, had first called them into existence, so once more attempts were made to introduce innovations as a "draw" to customers. In 1695, an advertisement records that:

At the Marine Coffee-house in Birchin Lane is water gruel to be sold every morning from 6 till 11 of the clock. 'Tis not yet thoroughly known, but there comes such company as drinks usually 4 or 5 gallons in a morning.

So one enterprising proprietor pushed the claims of his house. The coffee-houses stood almost next door to one another, even the smallest courts and alleys had two or three. Garraway's, Jonathan's and the Barbadoes were in 'Change Alley, Tom's (after 1691 called Dewing's) and Bridge's in Pope's Head Alley, and others stood in every court and lane. It is difficult for the present generation to visualize Restoration London. Pope's Head Alley, for instance, now a mere passage through the new



building of the head office of one of the banks, once had some twenty houses, and nearly one hundred residents.

When Edward Lloyd's lease of his Tower Street premises expired, coincidently with the revival of the regular life of the central City, he took steps to move his business to a more favourable place, and he accordingly, in 1691, secured the tenancy of some commanding premises in Lombard Street, a few doors from the General Post Office which was then near St. Mary Woolnoth Church. The site of Lloyd's marked by one of the City Corporation's commemorative tablets, is now occupied by Coutts's Bank. The house taken by Edward Lloyd had apparently been rebuilt in 1687, for it was tenanted from that time until Lloyd acquired it by a French restaurateur, Jean la Roche, who carried on a well-known and old-established restaurant known as Pontac's. The fact that La Roche had so soon to quit his new premises would indicate that he had reopened too soon, before the residents had returned and the business houses were in full activity. Be this as it may, Edward Lloyd took over the premises at the Christmas quarter of 1691, and he soon made his establishment one of the foremost in the neighbourhood. He was a man of resource, and he attracted customers, not by advertising new drinks nor by installing gaming-tables, but by providing his *clientèle* with shipping intelligence and general news. His house had evidently, even at this time, become identified particularly with the shipping interest, for in 1692 an advertisement in the *Gazette* for the sale of three ships informs the public that "the

Inventories thereof are to be seen at Lloyd's Coffee-House in Lombard Street." Ships were sold by auction, or by "inch of candle"—the then current method—in the London Coffee-houses, and in this respect Lloyd's became pre-eminent for many years. For nearly two centuries numerous ship-sales were conducted at Lloyd's, the last being that of the "Great Eastern" in 1885. In the days of candle-auction, the practice was to measure off an inch, or half an inch, of candle and insert a pin. The candle was then lighted and bids called for, the highest bidder at the fall of the pin securing the property. The popular expression "to hear a pin drop" is derived from candle-auction. It may be noted in passing that the custom is still kept up at Aldermaston, Berkshire, where, in accordance with the terms of an ancient bequest, a property known as Church Acre is let every three years to the highest bidder at the fall of the pin in candle-auction.\* Ships and merchandize auctions were not the only ones conducted in coffee-houses: many notable libraries have been disposed of by candle-auction, at Bridge's, Jonathan's and other coffee-houses.†

\* *Observer*, December 22nd, 1918.

† I have collected much data relating to book-auctions in the London Coffee-Houses, which are to be found every year from 1678–1725 and from time to time thereafter. The following is an analysis of 124 of those held between 1678 and 1700 which were important enough to have printed catalogues :

Coffee-house.	Period.	Number of sales.
Batson's, Cornhill . . .	1693–1694 .	4
Board's, Ave Maria Lane . .	1695 .	1
Mrs. Bourn's, near Guildhall .	1695 .	1
Bridge's, Pope's Head Alley .	1680–1686 .	9
Carlisle, King Street . . .	1694 .	1
Child's, St. Paul's Churchyard .	1686–1695 .	2
Clerk's, Smithfield . . .	1691 .	1

To obtain his intelligence, Lloyd employed "runners" or messengers who went to and fro between the docks and his house, picking up news of arrivals, and any information that could be gleaned from the officers or crews of ships. The news was announced to the customers from a "pulpit" set up in the coffee-room. Soon after his establishment in Lombard Street, Edward Lloyd issued a newspaper of his own, appearing thrice weekly under the name of *Lloyd's News*, bearing the imprint "Printed for Edward Lloyd (Coffee-man) in Lombard Street." It was a single sheet, printed on both sides, containing port-news and shipping intelligence, but occasionally also brief items of general interest—war news, trials, executions and Parliamentary measures—were added. The enterprise came to an abrupt end in February, 1696/7 when a misleading statement in the paper gave offence to the House of Lords and brought about

Coffee-house.	Period.	Number of sales
Crown, Threadneedle Street . . .	1692 . . .	1
Dewing's—see Tom's (1).		
Exchange, Threadneedle Street . . .	1696 . . .	1
Frank's, Threadneedle Street . . .	1697 . . .	1
Guildhall, Basinghall Street . . .	1691-1695 . . .	16
Howson's, Devereux Court . . .	1697-1699 . . .	2
Ive's, Ivy Lane . . .	1692 . . .	1
John's, Cheapside . . .	1691 . . .	1
Jonathan's, 'Change Alley . . .	1682-1687 . . .	5
Knowl's, Southwark . . .	1694 . . .	1
Lyon's, near Doctors Commons . . .	1685 . . .	1
Richard's, Fleet Street . . .	1687-1692 . . .	4
Roll's, St. Paul's Churchyard (called Will's from 1692) . . .	1690-1693 . . .	15
Sam's, Ave Maria Lane . . .	1689-1690 . . .	5
Stable's, Bread Street . . .	1678 . . .	1
Temple, Fleet Street . . .	1699-1700 . . .	2
Tom's (1) Pope's Head Alley (called Dewing's from 1691) . . .	1687-1696 . . .	6
Tom's (2), Ludgate . . .	1691-1700 . . .	30
Tower, Tower Street . . .	1693 . . .	1
Walsal's, Bartholomew Close . . .	1697 . . .	1
Wellington's, Threadneedle Street . . .	1687 . . .	1

its immediate extinction. Edward Lloyd, however, continued to supply his customers with the latest intelligence, and he began to issue, at frequent intervals, printed sheets detailing the sailings and arrivals of ships. Two of these, issued in 1701 and 1702, have recently come into the possession of the Corporation of Lloyd's amongst the papers of Thomas Bowrey, a merchant and shipowner who was a contemporary of Edward Lloyd.\* These sheets are the forerunners of *Lloyd's List*, to which reference will presently be made. Besides these printed sheets, however, it was the regular custom at Lloyd's, as already mentioned, to announce news to customers as soon as it was received. Sometimes the news was false and was deliberately circulated to cause panic in the city. On Thursday, August 3rd, 1704, for instance, great dismay was caused in London by the news that the homeward-bound East India fleet, consisting of 15 ships, had been captured at St. Helena by the French. The news was conveyed by a letter addressed to Edward Lloyd and an account of it appeared next day in the *Daily Courant* (No. 719). The news-letter was suspected of being a forgery, and some piquancy is given to the affair by the fact that amongst the Bowrey Papers, now at Lloyd's, there is a letter written at Lloyd's Coffee-House on the day the news was received.† This letter is from Joseph Tolson, captain of one of Bowrey's ships, and in it an account of the affair is given to Bowrey who was at the time in the country. Tolson's letter was written the day before the *Daily Courant's*

\* Bowrey Papers, Nos. 914, 915.

† Bowrey Papers No. 239.

account appeared, and it contains so much detail that there cannot be any doubt that Tolson had the original before him as he wrote. On August 5th Lloyd received a further letter from his correspondent confessing that the first communication was a fraud, and Edward Lloyd promptly sent it to the Editor of the *Courant* with the following reply to the fraudulent correspondent, which was published with it :

Sir,—Whoever you are that wrote these two letters to Mr. Lloyd, he makes it his Request to you, that you would please to confirm your Willingness to take off the amusement made by the first, by writing him a third Letter in the same Hand the first was, which the second is not.

Friday Aug. 4.

E. L.

This is the only known letter from the pen of Edward Lloyd. This episode, however, is a mere incident. Generally speaking Lloyd's intelligence came from reliable sources, and his house had a great reputation as a centre of information. Steele in 1710 relates that it was the custom at Lloyd's Coffee House, "upon the first coming of news, to order a youth, who officiates as the Kidney [waiter] of the coffee-house, to get into the pulpit, and read every paper with a loud and distinct voice, while the whole audience are sipping their respective liquors."\* There is still a "pulpit"† in the centre of the Under-writing Room at Lloyd's, from which the crier in a "loud and distinct voice" occasionally announces important items of news, though his principal function to-day is to call the names of members and their

\* *Tatler*, December 26th, 1710, No. 268.

† Now dignified by the name of Rostrum.

clerks who are wanted by callers at the barriers or on the telephone.

Edward Lloyd gained some status in his Lombard Street parish and took a part in its affairs. His signature often occurs in the vestry minute-books of St. Mary Woolnoth parish. He was appointed a sidesman in 1697 and in 1699 Constable and Questman of Langbourne Ward. He was a churchwarden in 1702 and 1703. The parish registers of St. Mary Woolnoth also give us some further glimpses of his family. A child, "Handy, daughter of Edward and Abigail Lloyd, Coffeeman," was baptized on January 29th, 1692-3, and his daughter Mary was married in April, 1698. In the registers of the church of St. John, Hackney, the baptism is recorded, under date February 9th, 1695-6, of "Edward son of Edward and Abigail Lloyd." It seems likely, on the face of it, that this child was the son of our Edward Lloyd, but I have not succeeded in finding any further reference to him. No reference is made in Edward Lloyd's will to a son Edward, so if indeed he was the Coffee-man's child, he must have predeceased his father. On the other hand the names may be no more than a coincidence.\* In August, 1698,

\* Although in contemporary registers and wills I have found one or two other Abigail Lloyd's, I have found none other whose husband's name was Edward. The name Abigail is not a common one. In an analysis I recently made of the frequency of Christian names based upon the Baptism Registers of certain City parishes, I find the name Abigail occurring only in the proportion of 2 per thousand in the century 1538 to 1637, and 7 per thousand in 1638 to 1737, whilst the corresponding figures for Mary, for instance, are respectively 111 and 175, and for Elizabeth, 164 and 214. Nor is the name Edward so very common, for it occurs only 32 times per thousand in each of the two centuries aforesaid, as compared with the respective figures for John, 168 and 193; Thomas, 126 and 139; and William, 116 and 112.

Edward Lloyd's wife Abigail died and was buried at St. Mary Woolnoth, and two months later he obtained a license to marry Elizabeth Mashbourne, a widow. She seems to have been a person of some property, for a deed relating to the assignment of her goods by Edward Lloyd, dated January 22nd, 1712-3 is preserved in the library at Lloyd's.\* On October 7th, 1712, Elizabeth Lloyd died, and within two months, Edward Lloyd married again for the third and last time. On January 30th, 1712-3 his daughter Handy was married to William Newton, her father's head-waiter, who had been appointed by his will to succeed to the business of the coffee-house. On February 15th, 1712-13, Edward Lloyd died, and was buried on the 17th at St. Mary Woolnoth. His bones, however, were destined to be scattered. In 1716-17 the old church, which had withstood the Great Fire, was in such an unsafe condition that it was demolished, and it was rebuilt by Wren's pupil Hawksmoor, being reopened in 1727. Lloyd was buried within the church, beneath the floor of the middle of the nave, and his remains must have been turned out when the excavations for Hawksmoor's church were made, for the new building had a great vault beneath it which necessitated the removal of many feet of earth below the old floor level. It has been stated that "his remains, with those of all other persons buried in the vaults of the church, were transferred in 1892 to Ilford Cemetery, where they lie under one common monument."† This statement, which is repeated

\* Lloyd's Documents, F. 2.

† Charles Wright and C. E. Fayle, 'History of Lloyd's' (1928), p. 33.

on the bronze tablet to the memory of Edward Lloyd recently erected in St. Mary Woolnoth Church by the Corporation of Lloyd's, is incorrect. The bodies removed to the City of London cemetery in 1892 were those of persons who had been placed in the vault of the new church after its completion in 1727, the earliest of which burials are fourteen years later than the death of Edward Lloyd.

William Newton, the first of many successors, carried on Lloyd's Coffee House under its old name. The goodwill and reputation of the house were too valuable to suffer any change of title, and in the same way Garraway's and many other coffee-houses continued to be known by their founders' names. It would occupy too much time to follow the fortunes of Lloyd's Coffee House under the various successors who followed one another as masters. But an important event of the year 1734 must be noticed. It has already been stated that Edward Lloyd, during his lifetime, had issued a newspaper, *Lloyd's News*, and after its publication had ceased, he had followed this up by the issue of periodical printed sheets of shipping intelligence. Presumably this practice was continued by his successors, for in 1734 the irregular issue of these intelligence-sheets was put on a permanent basis by the foundation of a regular journal, *Lloyd's List*. This journal was published weekly until 1737, then bi-weekly for a century, till 1837, since when it has appeared, and still appears, daily. It is thus the oldest newspaper in London with a continuous and unbroken record of publication. The prompt publication of sailings, arrivals and casualties was of supreme importance



to merchants, shippers and underwriters, and Lloyd's had become, for many years, especially identified with the latter. Lloyd's was in a specially favourable position, as the proprietors had come to an arrangement with the Post Office for the conveyance of intelligence from correspondents, a monopoly that was enjoyed for many years.

The news provided by the proprietor of Lloyd's Coffee House was not only of interest to the public, but also of value to the Government. On March 11th, 1739-40, for instance.

Mr. Baker, Master of Lloyd's Coffee House in Lombard Street, waited on Sir Robert Walpole, with the news of Admiral Vernon's taking Porto Bello. This was the first Account received thereof, and proving true, Sir Robert was pleased to order him a handsome Present. Mr. Baker had his Letter of Advice by the Titchfield, Capt Gardner, from Jamaica, who sail'd from thence with the Triumph, Capt. Renton, and got to Dover a Day before him.\*

For many years afterwards Lloyd's kept in close touch with the Admiralty and not only supplied intelligence, but co-operated in all matters affecting merchant shipping, and maritime affairs in general.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, Lloyd's had become the recognized centre of marine underwriting activity in London, but it was not as yet a corporate body or even a regularly constituted society. There are indications, however, that some sort of definite understanding existed between the regular frequenters of the house, which amounted almost to definite membership, for John Elliot

\* *Gentleman's Magazine*, March, 1739-40. Richard Baker was Master of Lloyd's Coffee House from 1738 to 1748.

(1735-1813), a well-known London Quaker, states in his journal that in 1757 he went to Lloyd's Coffee House and there "subscribed the book at 2 guineas a year," thereby becoming a regular underwriter and a member of the fraternity.\* The daily activities of the coffee-house continued without interruption till 1769, when in consequence of some deterioration in the management coupled with the invasion of the house by customers who dealt in speculative business that was distasteful to the respectable "regulars," caused the more influential of the latter seceded from the establishment and sought more congenial surroundings elsewhere. The rage for speculation that culminated in 1720 in the South Sea Bubble, does not seem to have seriously affected Lloyd's. Many, if not most, of the wild schemes of that period originated in the coffee-houses near the Royal Exchange, and certain marine insurance ventures that were floated at Lloyd's were sound enough to survive the great crash. The promoters of the most daring schemes met elsewhere than at Lloyd's, principally at Garraway's in 'Change Alley. Swift, in his 'Ballad on the South Sea Scheme' (1721), thus alludes to Garraway's (or Garway's, as it was often called)† :

There is a gulf, where thousands fell,  
 Here all the bold adventurers came,  
 A narrow sound, though deep as hell,  
 'Change Alley is the dreadful name.

Subscribers here by thousands float  
 And jostle one another down,  
 Each paddling in his leaky boat,  
 And here they fish for gold—and drown.

\* 'The Elliot Papers' (privately printed), 1896.

† Both spellings are found in the registers of St. Mary Woolnoth.

Now buried in the depths below,  
 Now mounted up to heaven again,  
 They reel and stagger to and fro,  
 At their wits' end, like drunken men.

Meantime secure on Garway's cliffs,  
 A savage race, by shipwrecks fed,  
 Lie waiting for the founder'd skiffs  
 And strip the bodies of the dead.

The activities of the speculative promoters, when the great crash came, suffered a check from which recovery was slow. After the middle of the century, however, speculators were regaining courage, and the mania for gambling waxed once more, though it did not reach its former level. At Lloyd's it took the form of gambling on highly speculative risks, and although dignified by the name of insurance, it was a type of business abhorrent in the highest degree to the underwriters who were solely concerned in sound and legitimate marine insurance. A further hint of nascent organization is provided by the fact that the "regulars" considered themselves so closely connected with the name of Lloyd's that they resented any innovation that might bring discredit upon that name, and that they left the coffee-house in a body, and having persuaded one of the waiters\* to turn coffee-man and open a house for their reception, they migrated to Pope's Head Alley, near at hand, to a house that was called the New Lloyd's Coffee House. The retention of the name of Lloyd's for the new establishment is again evidence that the name

\* Thomas Fielding, Master from 1769 till his death, January 11th, 1778.

was inseparably connected with marine underwriting. The publication of shipping news was continued in the *New Lloyd's List*, an arrangement having been made with the Post Office for the continuance of their service. For a time the new and the old Lloyd's Coffee Houses and the new and the old *Lloyd's Lists* continued side by side as competitors, but it was not long before the old establishment succumbed to the rivalry of Pope's Head Alley, and put up its shutters for the last time. The qualifying "new" was then dropped and it is from this offshoot that Lloyd's of to-day is descended.

The removal to Pope's Head Alley was only temporary. The business and importance of Lloyd's rendered larger and more dignified premises not only necessary but pressing, and in 1771 a subscription was opened to provide funds for a permanent building. Seventy-nine merchants and underwriters each put up £100 and subscribed the following resolution :

We the Underwriters do agree to pay our Several Subscriptions into the Bank of England in the Names of a Committee to be chosen by Ballot for the building a New Lloyd's Coffee House.

This resolution marks the real beginning of Lloyd's as an organized body managed by an elected committee. The committee having considered various schemes for premises, quarters were eventually secured in the Royal Exchange, where the subscribers of Lloyd's took possession in 1774 and where they remained until the removal into the new building in 1928. At this point we must end the story of Lloyd's. Since 1771 it has been an organization of

steady growth and progress, and gradually, though Lloyd's remained a coffee-house until 1844, the old order was reversed, for the underwriters, instead of being the customers of the coffee-house, became the owners, and the Master and waiters their servants. In 1838, Lloyd's was exiled from the Royal Exchange by the fire that totally destroyed the building, and after carrying on their business in temporary premises, the old South Sea House, the members returned to the rebuilt Exchange in 1844. In that year the mastership was abolished, the words "coffee-house" were dropped from the title and the organization became in all essentials the same as it is to-day. It is interesting to note in passing, that although Lloyd's ceased to be a coffee-house in 1844,\* it took the Post Office three quarters of a century to realize the change, for until the end of 1918 the official printed envelopes in which Post-Office communications were received still bore the address, "Lloyd's Coffee-House, Royal Exchange, E.C."

It is not necessary to dwell upon Lloyd's of the present day, with its complex and expanding activities. It has agents or representatives in every port, signal stations in every country, and the most complete system of marine intelligence in the world. The name is a household word throughout the entire inhabited surface of the globe.

Had time permitted, something might have been

\* Although Lloyd's is no longer a coffee-house, the old tradition still survives. The underwriters' "boxes," for instance, are still modelled upon the tables and benches of the coffee-house, and if a little more spacious, they are quite as hard and uncomfortable as their prototypes. The liveried staff are still called waiters, and the members' restaurant still keeps its old name—The Captain's Room.

said of some of the prominent men whose names are associated with Lloyd's. Among these the name of John Julius Angerstein (1735-1823) is pre-eminent. His name is known to the public to-day chiefly as the owner of the thirty-eight pictures that formed the nucleus of the National Gallery, and as a philanthropist and the trusted financial adviser of William Pitt. He was in effect the "father of Lloyd's," and it was owing to his activity and influence that Lloyd's secured premises in the Royal Exchange, and through his foresight and ability that the constructive reforms were introduced that formed the real foundations of modern Lloyd's. One might also have mentioned Sir Brook Watson (1735-1807), the wooden-legged chairman of Lloyd's, who was Lord Mayor of London in 1796 and to whom the corporation owes much. Zachary Macaulay (1768-1838), the father of the historian, and himself a man of celebrity, was an early member, as was also Miles Peter Andrewes (1742-1814), dramatist, dandy and wit, who played a prominent part in the Lyttleton Ghost Story ; and many, many more could be added.

Enough I hope has been said to show that out of small beginnings, great things may take shape. When Edward Lloyd, coffee-man, opened his modest little shop in Tower Street in the reign of James II, he little knew that he was thereby making himself, not the founder, but the originator, of one of the greatest institutions in the world, and that his name would cling, not only to that institution, but to many others abroad in imitation of it, and to many steamship lines—the Lloyd Adriatico, Lloyd Americano, Lloyd Brasileiro, Lloyd del Pacífico, Lloyd Mediterraneo,

Lloyd Royal Belge, Norddeutscher Lloyd, and others, and the air-line German Aero Lloyd.

It is curious to reflect that Lloyd's exists to-day because our forefathers were fond of coffee. Will ices or cock-tails ever produce the like ?

As a tail-piece to this paper, I would like to say a few words about H.M.S. "Lutine."

In the centre of the great Underwriting Room at Lloyd's there hangs a venerable ship's bell. It has for many years been rung when announcements of special importance have to be made, and particularly of news of overdue vessels. Instant silence follows upon a single musical note from the bell.

How came the "Lutine" bell thus to hang in the midst of Lloyd's ? The story must be briefly told.

On August 20th, 1793, the Royalists at Toulon, in order to prevent the French warships in the port from falling into the hands of the Republicans, surrendered sixteen of them to the British Fleet under Admiral Lord Hood, and a frigate named "La Lutine" ("Elf" or "Sprite") was one of that number. She had been launched at Brest in 1785, and was a frigate of 36 guns, 950 tons, and her gun-deck measured 143 feet. Unlike most of the French ships taken by Lord Hood, she was in good condition, and she was taken into the British Navy and named H.M.S. "Lutine." She was attached to the Mediterranean fleet, and served under Nelson who had charge of a frigate squadron off Corsica. She is often mentioned in Nelson's letters in 1794. The "Lutine" was afterwards sent to Gibraltar, and she sailed for England on September 25th, 1795. Arrived in

England, she was repaired and refitted at Woolwich and her armament reduced to 32 guns. When ready for service once more, she was attached to the North Sea Fleet, with which she served for several years. In June, 1799, the "Lutine" was lying in Yarmouth Roads, and Captain Lancelot Skynner, the son of a Lincolnshire clergyman, was appointed to her. During the autumn of that year, as the result of Napoleon's activities, a severe financial crisis occurred in Germany. The British merchants in Hamburg were hard pressed. The London bankers and merchants, anxious for the credit of British trade, resolved to send large remittances to Hamburg and they applied to the Admiral commanding the North Sea Fleet for a King's ship to carry over their treasure. Lord Duncan allotted the "Lutine" for this service, and gold and silver bullion to the value of over one million sterling were sent down to Yarmouth by coach. There was nothing unusual in employing a ship of the Royal Navy for such a purpose. The seas were swarming with enemy frigates and privateers, and it was not safe to entrust so valuable a cargo to a merchant ship. The "Lutine" took in her valuable cargo and sailed for Cuxhaven on October 9th, 1799. About midnight on October 9-10th, when near the mouth of the Zuyder Zee, being under a full press of sail, she struck on the sands of the outer bank of Vlieland. She instantly sank, and all hands perished save two survivors, who were picked up on floating spars but lived only a few hours.

The cargo was insured at Lloyd's and the underwriters promptly paid a total loss. Various salvage



operations have been undertaken : in 1800-1, 1814, 1821-2, 1857-61, 1885-88, 1888-93, and 1912. The value of the salvage recovered exceeds £100,000 but this sum represents but a small part of the cargo. Although the wreck lies fairly near the coast in no great depth of water. salvage operations, owing to currents and the constant shifting of the sand. have been attended with the greatest difficulties, and it is doubtful if any substantial amount of the rich cargo will ever more see the light of day. In addition to gold and silver, a certain number of relics has been raised from time to time. The bell was fished up in 1859, and the rudder of the ship was recovered at the same time, and from its timber a table and chair were made : all these are now in the library at Lloyd's. - Three guns were brought up at a later date : they were loaded to the muzzles with double shot and grape-shot. One of them is now on the terrace of Windsor Castle, the second in the City of London School, and the third is at the Lloyd's Sports Ground at Fairlop. Parts of the ship's log-slate, some gold and silver coins, and some personal relics of the crew, including the captain's watch, are amongst the treasures of Lloyd's.

The "Lutine" bell is  $52\frac{1}{2}$  inches in circumference at the lower end and weighs nearly a hundredweight, (actually 106 lb.). It is interesting to note that it was not made for her, but for another ship, for it bears the name "Saint Iean" and the date "1779." It was therefore re-used when the "Lutine" was launched in 1785. Finally, it may be mentioned that between 1793 and 1806 there were four successive "Lutines" in the French Navy, and they all became

British prizes. The first, a light brig of 12 guns, was captured off Newfoundland on July 25th, 1793, by the British sloop "Pluto," under the command of James Nicoll Morris, who was later captain of H.M.S. "Colossus" at Trafalgar, and who died, a K.C.B. and Vice-Admiral, in 1830. The second "Lutine" was the frigate whose bell is at Lloyd's. The third was a sloop of 14 guns and was captured in 1798, whilst the fourth "Lutine" was captured on March 24th, 1806, off the Leeward Islands by Nelson's old ship, H.M.S. "Agamemnon," in conjunction with the "Carysport" frigate. The last was taken into the British Navy and renamed "Hawk." The loss of the second "Lutine" had made the name unlucky, and although many British ships were named after French prizes, the name "Lutine" was never again used for a vessel in the British Navy.

# THE OLD ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH POPULAR BALLADS.

BY PADRAIC GREGORY, F.R.S.L.

[Read January 7th, 1931.]

BOSWELL has related that he once offered to teach Dr. Johnson the Scottish dialect in order to enable the great man to appreciate the beauties of a certain Scottish poem. He also tells us the learned doctor's reply : " No, sir, I will not learn it. You shall retain your superiority by my not knowing it." Now, though I do not believe that the indifference of Dr. Johnson to Scottish poetry is typical of the attitude of all cultured Irishmen and Englishmen, there can be no doubt that the beauty of many of our old popular ballads has failed to touch the hearts of a vast majority of every generation, or that there are many who are still ignorant of the fact that there exists any difference between the old Border Ballads and the narrative poems of any one of the major or minor Scottish poets.

It is hardly necessary for me to tell the audience before me that short poems, lyrics, political satires, hymns, stories in verse, and even modern sentimental drawing-room songs, have been, and still are, referred to as ballads ; or that for the majority there exists no difference between these compositions and

the ballad of 'Sir Patrick Spens' or the ballad of 'Kinmont Willie.' The best detailed definition of the word "ballad" extant is, in my opinion, that of Prof. Kittredge. It will be found in his very fine "Introduction" to the edition of the English and Scottish Popular Ballads which he prepared in conjunction with Helen Sargent from Prof. Child's great collection. The ballad now referred to is a narrative poem of unknown authorship, meant for singing or recitative purposes, and connected, as its name implies, with the communal dance; and here, without more ado, I touch on the vexed point of this question—the riddle of the origin of ballads.

To this riddle many answers have been suggested. One is that ballads, as we know them, are the product of the spontaneity of vocal accompaniments to folk-dances, the rhythm of dancing feet suggesting refrains. Another answer is that they were created by bards, minstrels and wandering tale-tellers.

Those who disagree with the first answer argue that the verbal accompaniment to communal dancing would never take the form of a lengthy romance; they can understand residuary broken verses or refrains, such as 'Here we go round the Mulberry Bush' or 'Round the Merry May Tanzie'; or even appreciate in some of the games acted by the people fragments suggesting dramatic situations; they concede that in some of the old folk-games or dances there might be opportunity for acting a short drama, as when the players take sides, join hands, walk up and confront each other and join in rude dialogues; but, they state, there is a great gulf between any dance, game or play and such ballads

as 'Chevy Chase,' 'The Dowie Dens,' or 'Kinmont Willie.'

Those who disagree with the second answer state that when they study the structure and the elements of the ballad itself as a poetic form, a form connected with choral dramatic conditions, but modified by epic process in the course of oral tradition, they are compelled to abandon the theory of minstrel-authorship. 'They add that it is useless to hunt for the "original" document of any ballad, or to compare varying versions; useless also to lean upon chronology, because some of the ballads, gathered within a century or so, are older in form than many of the Percy Ballads, and closer to the traditional ballad type.

Moreover, those who disagree with the communal dance theory should always remember the origin of the Greek drama; and also that primitive peoples, such as the native Australians and the American Indians, usually accompanied their dances with song, that Greek, Russian and other Eastern European peasants still dance to improvised song accompaniment, and that, even to-day, in the Hebrides, various singers speak verses during a dance and thus a rude ballad is made collectively.

Again it were well for those who disagree with the minstrel-authorship theory to remember that a caste of minstrels did exist, that the change which came over these countries in the Middle Ages resulted in the evolution of a professional poet class who, as Percy tells us, "subsisted by the arts of Poetry and Music." It were well for those who disagree with the minstrel-authorship theory also to bear in mind that,

though the ballad is distinctly rooted in folk-song, it has, at the same time, a certain technique, which lifts it far above the category of dance rhymes. The universal characteristics of folk-song are as to substance, repetitions, interjections, and refrains, and although not one of the old Border Ballads illustrates all these characteristics, they are all to be found in the ballads taken collectively.

I have here given you two of the principal answers to the riddle of the origin of ballads, and I have stated—very hurriedly, I admit—the gist of one or two of the reasons generally tendered by those who disagree with them.

My principal reason for neither agreeing nor disagreeing *in toto* with these theories is because in my humble opinion they are both partly correct. I believe some of the old popular ballads sprang direct from the people, and that some are the work, or the remains of the work, of minstrels whose names and histories are forgotten.

There is no doubt that one of the main interests in the ballad minstrelsy is due to their anonymity, and it must be remembered with regard to anonymity that all records of authors are manifestly incomplete, that though Ovid bequeathed us a great legacy in the catalogue of the poets of his day, he omits the name of Manilius, and Heywood and Taylor in their exhaustive list of contemporary Elizabethan dramatists make no mention of Cyril Tourneur. Moreover, although the Scottish poet Dunbar records the names of twenty-one of his country's bards, he passes over such estimable men as Thomas the Rhymer and King James. With regard to the latter another

writer not only neglects to recognize him as a poet, but apparently forgets others as famous as Barbour, Blind Harry, Wyntoun, Kennedy and Douglas. Taking such omissions into consideration, it cannot be a matter of wonder that the names should have been totally forgotten of those who composed, or partly composed ballads which at first delighted only the rude Border folk.

In his 'History of Scotland' Bishop Leslie tells us that our rude Border men delight in their own music, and in the songs that they themselves make about their deeds and about the deeds of their forbears; Piers Plowman names the romances of 'Robin Hood' and 'Randolph' as being known in the fourteenth century by the common people; Gaston Paris tells us that the early Germanic and English warriors sang their own deeds before the day of the professional poet; therefore I do not think it too bold to presume that some of the Scots ballads, which have a basis of fact in historic event, such as the raid at Otterburn or the burning of the House of Airlie, owed their earliest form to the improvisation of raiders who could sing their own deeds.

There has been a great deal of controversy round the question of the historical basis of one of the ballads I have just referred to which is known as 'The Hunting of the Cheviots' or, more popularly, 'Chevy Chase,' of which Sir Philip Sidney wrote: "I have never heard the olde song of Percie and Duglas, that I found not my hearte mooved more than with a Trumpet; and yet is it sung but by some blinde Crowder, with no rougher voyce than rude stile . . ."

The ballad describes the battle which took place

between the Scots and the English in August. 1388, at Otterburn, some thirty miles north-west of Newcastle. The oldest copies, alike of 'The Battle of Otterburn' and 'The Hunting of the Cheviots,' are manuscripts dating from about 1550, but they probably represent still older compositions. Two forms of the English version are extant, and though Prof. Gummere speaks truly when he says that "even 'Cheviot' and 'Otterburn,' while of the undoubted type of balladry, are not, in more exact analysis, of the typical ballad construction which one finds in ballads recovered from genuine oral tradition," its subject, its form, its length, and both its good and bad points, all tend to make me regard it as the work of some forgotten "wight of Homer's craft," and to believe that it had, at any rate, a higher origin than in the rattle of the heels of dancing peasants.

On the other hand, if we examine a ballad like 'Babylon,' or 'The Bonnie Banks o' Fordie,' called by Kinloch 'The Duke of Perth's Three Daughters'—

" There were three ladies lived in a bower,  
 Eh, wow, bonnie,  
 And they went out to pu' a flower  
 On the bonnie banks o' Fordie "—

it will be seen that in this type of ballad the situation is the main thing, and is developed by a method which depends upon choral and dramatic conditions. The action advances by a series of repetitions in sets of three stanzas, each repetition containing an increment, and, as we all know, this incremental repetition is the main mark of old ballad structure; I need make no further remarks on this ballad; everyone who has



heard the never-varying refrains repeated will appreciate how easily this tale could be acted as well as sung, and how near it is to the choral throng, to the beating of feet and the clapping of hands.

Then there are ballads such as the 'Nut Brown Maid' and 'Auld Maitland,' round which much controversy has raged regarding their authenticity. The former, we are told by some, is genuine, and by others that it has "not the faintest claim to its position in many a collection of popular traditional verse."

Sir Walter Scott and Dr. John Leyden were both convinced of the authenticity of 'Auld Maitland,' but Aytoun and Prof. Child regarded it as a counterfeit, and the latter does not include it in his great ballad collection. In his introduction to 'Auld Maitland' Scott says: "The ballad notwithstanding, its present appearance has a claim to very high antiquity. It has been preserved by tradition, and is, perhaps, the most authentic instance of a long and very old poem exclusively thus preserved." Aytoun contradicts this in the following words: "My doubt as to the authenticity of this ballad is founded, as all such doubts ought to be, on intrinsic evidence. The diction appears to me to be throughout imitative; but what weighs with me most is this—that the ballad is so defective in dramatic construction, that I cannot understand how it could have passed into, or been maintained by tradition." The fact that Prof. Child dropped it from his list weighs with me even more than the sound arguments advanced by Aytoun, and although Andrew Lang made a vigorous plea for the ballad and for Scott's opinion, I hold

Scott to be often deserving of more blame than praise for his haphazard methods of collecting and editing. We know, for instance, that he accepted versions of 'The Twa Corbies' and 'Barthram's Dirge,' and that Hogg had only to go to him and say, "An old woman in Yarrow recited" this or that to have it accepted without question. However, while saying this against Scott, it must be admitted that (though 'Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs' was issued in 1769 and in 1776, Pinkerton's collection in 1783. Ritson's in 1796, not forgetting Johnson's, which had the help of Burns), 'Scott's Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border,' with 'Percy's Reliques,' struck the clearest note of influence for the ballad. I fear I have no time to speak at greater length on this point, or offer any other reasons for believing that some of the old ballads sprang directly from the people, and that some are the work, or the remains of the work of the professional minstrels of past centuries.

Now may I say, when the average Englishman picks up a volume of the poems of Robert Burns and reads, or attempts to read, something from it in the eighteenth century Ayrshire dialect, if you watch him closely you will find that he keeps one eye on the text and one eye on the glossary at the bottom of the page; nine Irishmen out of ten do the same thing, or else they will read the poem *ad sensum*, feeling perfectly happy if they can catch the general meaning, enjoy the lilt and appreciate the rhythm. And this is, perhaps, all that can be expected of the average Englishman or Irishman. But one of the results of their ignorance of the Scottish vernacular classics is that they accept Burns and his predecessors

without question, and regard Burns as a major poet simply because they have read or have been told that Burns is a major poet. Indeed, so far as the average Englishman or the average Irishman is concerned, what Voltaire so absurdly said of Dante—that his reputation was safe because no intelligent people read him—is partly true of Burns; and the same thing might be said in all sincerity and with perfect truth of the reputations of the anonymous authors of the old English and the old Scottish ballads. In order fully to appreciate some of these ballads, one must possess more than a rudimentary knowledge of ancient and uncouth dialects, must be familiar with the meanings of obsolete and archaic words, and also be prepared to accept ballad convention, for the average reader grows weary when the ballad-folk all do the same things under the same circumstances, and express the same thoughts in the same way. The young men of the ballads are always discovered “combing” or “trapping” their steeds, which are invariably “milk-white” or “berry-brown”; the young women are sure to be discovered “playing at ball,” or “combing their yellow hair,” or “sewing the silken seam.” The pages, who are always “little,” when sent on errands never fail to come to broken bridges, and are compelled to swim across rivers or to “bend their bows,” that is to say, to use their bows as vaulting-poles to assist them to leap from one bank to another. If a lady is about to set out for a walk she is sure to kilt her kirtle “a little about her knee.” If she is compelled to run we are almost certain to be told “I wis she never blan,” that is, never stopped to take breath. In ballads a murder is seldom committed

with an axe. a pike. a sword. or a dagger; it is always committed with a "wee penknife."

These and many other more serious reasons have been put forward by our English and continental experts in their attempts to explain away the lack of interest in balladry displayed even by literary men; but. in my opinion. a better explanation for this neglect is that. till Prof. Child began in 1882 and completed in 1898 his great edition of the English and Scottish ballads. even literary men knew very little, or were certain of very little about our ballads. Let it not be thought for a moment that I fail to appreciate or mean to disparage the work done by Ramsay, Burns, Percy, Johnson, Herd. Ritson, Scott, Sharpe. Kinloch. Motherwell. Burton. or my countryman William Allingham, and more modern lovers of the ballad like Aytoun, Kittredge, Henderson and the late Andrew Lang. but I remember. nevertheless. that many ballad enthusiasts, even some of those whose names I have mentioned, were not content to arrange, annotate and publish what they gathered. Some, especially the poet-collectors, were not fitted for the task, if for no other reason than that the old ballads contain many a haunting line of poetry. Haunting lines have been known to beget whole poems, and when we remember what the fragment 'How should I your love know?' could do for Rossetti and others. and what 'Child Roland to the dark tower came' could do for Browning. it is not to be wondered at that it is hard to tell how much the versions of the Scottish ballads given by Allan Ramsay in his 'Evergreen' and in his 'Tea Table Miscellany' owe to his poetic fancy. Bishop Percy, too, Sir Walter Scott

informs us, "was accustomed to restore the ancient ballads by throwing in touches of poetry, so adapted to its tone and tenor as to assimilate with the original structure and to impress one who considered the subject as being co-eval with the rest of the piece."

There was one man whom Percy's "touches of poetry" did not impress, and that man was the late Prof. Francis Child, for, even as a learned architect or archæologist will strip and cut away from the wall of an ancient building rough slabbings of cement or numerous coats of drab paint, and ultimately expose to our view a beautiful piece of old mosaic, so Prof. Child stripped the ballads in Percy's collection of the good bishop's "touches of poetry," and gives them back to us as they were originally noted in the long ago. The publication of the 'Percy Folio MSS.' of 1867-8 of the 'Percy Folio MSS.' of 1650, from which Percy took part of the ballads he gave us in his 'Reliques,' and the discoveries of other ballad versions, show us that Percy did a great deal more than throw in "touches of poetry."

We now know that out of the original eleven stanzas of 'The Child of Ell' in the 'Percy Folio MSS.' he made a poem of fifty stanzas for his 'Reliques.' William Allingham also sinned by changing 'Bonnie James Campbell,' by putting a weak and intrusive stanza of his own into 'The Wife of Usher's Well,' and by deleting stanzas from others. Scott, in his 'Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border' failed in his classification; he classes, or rather, he dumps together, under the head of "Romantic," a great many ballads, some founded on fairy inspiration, some on witchcraft, some properly historical, and others that

represent emotions of love and hate. A classification of this sort is obviously of no critical value, for there is no principle of division among the ballads which, if rigidly laid down, would not at once be crossed, because the supernatural, the historical, the mythic and the legendary elements are constantly blended. Therefore, when we take all these things into consideration, there can be no doubt that a complete and untitivated collection like Prof. Child's, which includes over three hundred pieces, most of them in a number of different versions, and containing accounts of parallels in other languages, had to be made before even the literary man could begin to study minutely and systematically this kind of literature.

And now may I say a very few words of the literary history of the first half of the eighteenth century, or rather of the eighteenth century's slowly-awakening appreciation of our older literature? The eighteenth century, as that delightful writer, Austin Dobson, neatly puts it, was an age—

“ When Rhyming turned from Freedom to the schools  
And, shocked with Licence, shuddered into Rules ;  
When Phoebus touched the poet's trembling ear  
With one supreme commandment, *Be thou clear*.  
When thought meant less to reason than compile,  
And the Muse laboured—chiefly with the file.  
Beneath full wigs no lyric drew its breath  
As in the days of great Elizabeth ;  
And to the bards of Anna was denied  
The Note that Wordsworth heard on Duddon-side.”

The eighteenth century was, apart from any question of sentiment that may sanctify one period

or execrate another, an age of continuous development, not only in literature, but in the other arts. The term "eighteenth century" is as vaguely used as the term "Elizabethan," but if we take it as beginning with the latter years of Dryden's life, we see that it extends from a time when there was practically no English painting at all to the arrival of Hogarth and his minor contemporaries, and from him to the great age of Reynolds and Gainsborough. Thanks to Lecky, Stephen, Courthope, Traill, Edmund Gosse, Austin Dobson and others, the eighteenth century is now better understood and more justly appraised than it was even as late as the early 1900's. Nevertheless, the modern man has a habit of treating the eighteenth century as lacking in seriousness and given over to superficiality; but surely there was something more than superficiality in Addison with his gentle irony; in Pope, who never lifted his eyes from the moral aspect of life; in Defoe, who wrote on any and every subject; in Swift, a great, if inverted moralist; in Thompson, the serious if quasi-artificial nature poet; in Young, the homilist in blank verse; in Gray, in Richardson, in Dr. Johnson and his famous circle; and in others whose names spring to your memories as readily as they do to my own. But, as I have said, we will take the eighteenth century as beginning with the latter years of Dryden's life. Classic literature had been revived in the fifteenth century, Romantic was to be in the eighteenth, and Dryden was acknowledged to be the greatest of the "classic school." As we all know, he was in his grave long before Burns began to sing his songs, long before Percy began to collect his

ballads, and long before the birth of the leaders of the Romantic Movement, but there can be little doubt that he heard, if very faintly, the mellow strains of the silver bugles of romance, for his powerful mind justly appreciated the beauty and the strength of our older literature. Defoe tells us that Dryden could "change his principles, change his religion, change his coat, change his master, and yet never change his nature." A man of his character, a man who strove, and not unsuccessfully, to be all things to all men, could not, I submit, be expected to give Chaucer's tales as they should have been given to the poetry-lovers of his day, but even when revising and spoiling Chaucer's works, Dryden admired them. He was one of the first poetry-collectors who admitted some of our old ballads into the society of other poems, and in his 'Miscellany Poems'—of which the first volume appeared in 1684 and the last eight years after his death—are to be found 'Little Musgrave,' 'Chevy Chase,' 'Johnny Armstrong,' 'Gilderoy,' and 'The Miller and the King's Daughters.' Further proof of Dryden's love of our old ballads, and of the century's slowly-awakening appreciation of our older literature, is to be found in a number of the *Spectator*, which says: "I have just heard that the late Lord Dorset, who had the greatest wit tempered with the greatest candour, and was one of the finest critics as well as the best poets of his age, had a numerous collection of old English ballads and took a particular pleasure in the reading of them. I can affirm the same of Mr. Dryden, and know several of the most refined writers of our present age who are of the same humour." Addison, Rowe, Parnell, Tickell, Prior



and others also had a genuine relish for old ballads. Addison wrote about 'Chevy Chase' and 'The Children in the Wood' in the *Spectator*, while Rowe knew many of the old ballads very well, and that he thoroughly understood and appreciated them is proven by the prologue to his 'Jane Shore.'

Parnell's acquaintance with our older literature is shown in his 'Fairy Tale in the Ancient English Style' written in the metre of Chaucer's 'Tale of Sir Topas.' Of Tickell's 'Colin and Lucy' Goldsmith says: "Through all Tickell's works there is a strain of ballad-thinking, if I may so express it; and in this professed ballad he seems to have surpassed himself. It is perhaps the best of our language in this way." The author of 'The Deserted Village' was undoubtedly sincere when he thus expressed himself, but anyone who reads Tickell's 'Colin and Lucy'—in my opinion a weak and lifeless set of verses—and compares it with any of the tragic love ballads in Percy's 'Reliques,' will at once remark the absence of the true ballad note, and I cannot imagine what prompted Goldsmith to lavish praise on 'Colin and Lucy,' for we know that he loved the old ballads. The Irish poet tells us in one of his essays: "The music of the finest singer is dissonance to what I felt when our old dairymaid sung me into tears with Johnny Armstrong's 'Last Good-Night,' or 'The Cruelty of Barbara Allen.'" Prior, too, printed the old ballad, 'The Nut Brown Maid,' but only for the sake of his own ridiculous paraphrase of it entitled 'Henry and Emma,' yet the main thing is that he knew it and studied it.

The first collection of any worth of the English

ballads appeared in 1723, Allan Ramsay's 'Evergreen' in 1724, and the first volume of his 'Tea Table Miscellany' in the same year. The author of the first English collection is not known; Farmer ascribes it to one Ambrose Phillips.

Thompson's 'Orpheus Caledonius' appeared in 1725; and three volumes in one of Ramsay's 'Tea Table Miscellany' in 1729; but it was not till the middle of the century that the old ballad secured a hearing. In 1755 Robert and Andrew Foulis published the now well-known ballads 'Gell Morice' (which suggested to Home his tragedy of 'Douglas' and which Gray thought "divine"), 'Young Waters,' in which we get a fine example of incremental repetition, and 'Edmund o' Gordon,' certain stanzas of which are worthy to rank with the best descriptive verse. In 1760 'The Nut Brown Maid' again appeared in Cappel's 'Prolusions,' this time for its own sake and no longer accompanied by a paraphrase; in the same year appeared Macpherson's 'Ossian,' and in 1764 Evan's 'Poetry of the Welsh Bards.' About this time Gray was writing his paraphrases of romantic lyrics from Icelandic and Gaelic sources, though he did not publish till 1768; Chatterton was reading Chaucer and studying the two English dictionaries he borrowed from a circulating library for twopence a week, and writing his earliest poems. In spite of these and other publications the general character of our literature was at this time still highly didactic, but an unsuspected revolution had been going on, and the age was ready for a reliable collection of our old ballads. and in the year 1765 Thomas Percy published his 'Reliques of Ancient English Poetry,'

consisting of old heroic ballads, songs and other pieces by our earlier poets, together with some few of later date.

In the Early English Text Society's edition of the 'Percy Folio MSS.' the 'Reliques' are referred to as "a book destined not only to raise him to eminence in his profession, but to render his name a household word wherever the English language is spoken"; and Dr. Furnivall further states, "By his emendations and by his taste, public attention was first drawn to the ballad literature of our country; and so far am I from condemning him, that I hold him to have been a benefactor to literature." Furnivall did not err in his estimate of the Bishop, and we of the early twentieth century realize that Percy's aim was literary rather than critical, propagandist rather than antiquarian, that he was the first to succeed in making known the ancient poetic charm of the old ballads and reviving an interest in them as poetry; and though the scholar now turns to Prof. Child's collection, Percy's 'Reliques of Ancient Poetry' will always remain popular with the multitude.

On the effect of the revival of the ballad as a literary form I need not dwell; it was, perhaps, one of the most striking phenomena of the romantic revival, and if we think for a moment of the number of ballads with which English poetry was enriched from the publication of the 'Reliques' in 1765 till the appearance of 'Lyrical Ballads' in 1796, if we think of the other work of the Lake School, of the poems of Byron, Shelley, Keats and their followers, Tennyson and his Anglo-Irish and American contemporaries, and the

pre-Raphaelites, we must admit that Thomas Percy's 'Reliques' wrought lasting good.

We of this era have witnessed a continuance of interest in the ballad. The successes attained in this form by Browning, Morris, Swinburne, R. L. Stevenson, Henley, Dobson, Wilde, John Davidson, Sir William Watson, Sir Henry Newbolt and Kipling have greatly enriched English poetic literature. That the ballad form makes a wide appeal is beyond question—witness Oscar Wilde's 'Ballad of Reading Gaol,' and an entirely different type, Alfred Noyes' 'The Highwayman'; and the fact that true and very beautiful poetry can be enshrined in a ballad can be readily proved by reading Mr. Yeats's 'Ballad of Father Gilligan,' or 'The Ballad of Perkin Warbeck' and the 'Ballad of St. Vitus' by Lord Alfred Douglas. These ballad-makers, these poets, these gentlemen have ever remained conscious of the nobility and dignity of the poet's calling. They have never, it is pleasant to be able to record, attempted to flout tradition, to shock their generation, or to indulge in noetic acrobatics by striking what our Americans call "noo" notes. They have ever remained of a fact lightly dismissed by many modern ors of what is dubbed "free verse," namely, a world expects its poets to strike, not "noo" out beautiful notes. From time immemorial or poets of every race have concerned themselves with life and death, love and hate, joy and desire and regret, and the rest, or with various these themes. That wonderful critic, John n Collins, traced back to an original source every line penned by Tennyson. No, the

great singer, like the nightingale, does not strive after new notes, but after perfect ones ; he labours that this may be said of him : " What he does still betters what is done." The nightingale's song entrances us because of its beauty, not because of its newness. It is as sweet to our ears to-day as it was to the ears of Keats, and he tells us :

" The voice I hear this passing night was heard  
 In ancient days by emperor and clown ,  
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path  
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when sick for home  
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn."

When you go from this hall this evening and pass through some of the streets of your wonderful London, look around you, and though I venture to prophesy that your eyes will be offended, you will see samples of the havoc that is being slowly but surely wrought by those who are striking " noo " notes in architecture. There you may see the humbug glorification of the straight line, the undeserved desecration of the straight line, the distortion of the curve, and the absurd use of the parabola in place of the arc of a circle all in one " noo " shop front. It is no exaggeration to say of the majority of these examples of the grotesque that their exterior surfaces are so impossibly and so fantastically designed, against all the laws of good building construction, that, were they not hung or plastered on to substantial structures of steel, they would collapse. This is not a digression. I feel that behind this new note in architecture and literature, behind these very modern buildings and very modern books, designed and published to

shock—to arrest attention at any cost—there is a lack of spirituality, a shallowness, an incoherency, and a pretended contempt of authority and accumulated wisdom.

If my voice could reach the ears of the young writers of England this evening, I would ask them to remember that fine phrase of Sir William Watson's—

“ I have not paid the world  
The evil and the insolent courtesy  
Of offering it my baseness for a gift ”—

and I would ask them to memorize the quatrain from his poem entitled ‘ The Orgy on Parnassus ’ :

“ You may flout convention and scout tradition,  
With courage as great as your art is small,  
Where the kings of mind, with august submission,  
Have bowed to the laws that outlast you all.”

Of the aesthetic values of the ballad I will content myself by saying that they are the values which attach to strong verse intent upon its object. Ballad poetry is very direct, and in this it differs from poetry that is studiously inverted, full of enigmas with little or no meaning to them, and which, at times, covers commonplace thoughts with a glittering gauzy mantle of fine words.

I am affected by the reading of our old ballads as I am by no other poetry ; under their spell the present-day world fades away, and I live for a space in an England of “ green valleys ” and “ wild woods ” and old-world towns. I see Arthur's knights setting forth on the quest of the Holy Grail on champing steeds draped in cloth of gold, breastplates, helms and lances

glimmering in the yellow sunlight ; the air is fragrant with the faint perfume of new-kissed roses thrown to them from crowded balconies. I follow Sir Percival into the chapel of the ruined hermitage and cross myself at the sight of the dead knight surrounded by seven glimmering tapers. I watch Gawain smite the Green Knight in his northern solitude, or raise my eyes to the doors of Arthur's hall as Guinevere slips like a frightened wraith into the shadowy woods at Camelot. Maid Marion smiles from the ballads, and Robin Hood's hearty laugh rings in my ears. A frightened stag flees past me ; I catch a glimpse of huntsmen clad in Lincoln green ; I hear the twang of bows, and anon the triumphant clarion of the hunter's horn. At the Corpus Christi fairs I mingle with the crowd, and watch traders with wine from Spain, diapers and lawns from Flanders, amber from the Baltic, druggets from Drogheda and coarse cloths from the west country. On the highways near the towns I see retainers and pages of the great lords, aldermen clad in scarlet, craftsmen in their liveries, men-at-arms, palmers, wounded knights new come out of the Holy Land, black-cowled Benedictines, Carmelites in brown scapulary, Chauntry priests, pedants, and pilgrims journeying mayhap to kneel before the Holy Rood at Walsingham. When I read the old Scottish ballads I live for a space on the Border in the days when a strong arm knew no law but a stronger ; I hear the rustle of leaves in the forest, the sorrow-song of wan waters thro' lonely moss-land places, the cries of curlews over many a hastily dug grave, or the shrieking caws of corbies that circle over the body of some dead raider. I hear the swinging swish of a

clan of cattle-reivers thro' the bracken, or the deadened tramp of marching feet as the Scots troops sally forth to meet the English. I hear the shriek of the wind, and the snarl of the waves round the good ship of Sir Patrick Spens; I watch Edmon o' Gordon fire the House of Rhodes. and I lament with the fair ladie for her bairnes who have been impaled on cruel spears; or I join in the slogan which bore the sarcastic greetings of Kimmont Willie to the waking burghers of Carlisle.



## QUEENLY COMPARISONS.

BY SIR HENRY IMBERT-TERRY, BT., F.R.S.L.

[Read March 18th, 1931]

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL. in a certain essay, remarks that it is really impossible to know much of the character of people whom one has never seen or met.

It is indeed difficult mentally to portray with any degree of verisimilitude an individual with whom no converse has been held, who has only been seen through the mirage of a pageant, and whose actions and utterances are imperfectly known through the communications of the wireless, or that even less reliable medium, the partisan daily press.

To-day the libraries are crowded with volumes of the correspondence of distinguished persons, crowned heads or famous public men, and these effusions, together with that favourite and most remunerative form of fiction, the so-called personal reminiscences, constitute much of the material upon which historians have to depend for the substance of their records.

But although letters and personal recollections may furnish interesting information, and may add attractive colouring, yet, unless attached to a well-defined outline and supported by sound and substantial evidence, they afford a limited and distorted picture

of the writers, leaving, as a rule, an imperfect conception, both of the central figure and of the surroundings.

Lately many large and important volumes of the letters of Queen Victoria have been printed and published. They are so admirably edited that indubitably they will supply invaluable assistance to historians of the future, but, while giving an insight into the nature, predilections and prejudices of the royal scribe, while relating her constant interference in the management of the affairs of the realm and her frequent instructions to ministers as to the course they should pursue, these letters leave but an imperfect impression on the reader of many of the divergent facets which reflected the true character of this daughter of the Guelphs.

To take one instance :

They give, it is true, a vivid impression of her keenness of interest in all public matters ; they record the depth of her sorrow and bereavement at the death of her adored husband, yet they supply no adequate reason for that abstention from public appearances which marked the latter portion of her life, and which produced a separation between herself and her subjects absolutely different from the attitude she adopted in other respects.

What boy or girl of to-day could understand from the information conveyed in these letters the popular dissatisfaction engendered by the Queen's continuous absence from her capital, her invincible disinclination to take part in public functions, and her habitual assumption of widow's weeds even on an occasion of high state ceremonial ?

Yet all who participated in the Jubilee proceedings remember acutely that amidst the splendour and pageantry of the processions, the central royal figure alone provided a sombre and incongruous feature, and the recollection supplies, in part, the reason for the partial eclipse which the brief though triumphal sway of King Edward VII cast upon the end of his mother's reign.

If such effects can be produced by events almost within our personal recollections, how infinitely greater may have been the consequence of incidents of which we now only possess uncertain records or dim reflections.

To those who believe that a monarchical rule is the best and freest form of Government for a country, as protecting, by means of a specially invested and indoctrinated individual, the masses of the people from the domination and exploitation of the monied and money-making classes, a contrast between the four queens who occupied the throne of England may prove interesting and possibly instructive.

A hereditary monarchy, as well as a hereditary aristocracy, necessarily proceeds from the assumption that the human race possesses the same qualities of heredity as do all the other members of the animal creation.

A Yorkshire or Lancashire man, whatever may be his political principles, even if steeped to the lips in crude Marxism, and occasionally exuding from the same organs the Marxian theories as he understands them, would, if he possessed any of the idiosyncrasies of those two sporting counties, never dream of attempting to train a heavy draught horse to run in

the Grand National or the Derby Stakes, neither would he nor anyone else in his senses use a speedy, light-framed, so-called thoroughbred for the purpose of dragging a heavy load.

Yet the dray horses of Barclay & Perkins in their degree were as well bred as the denizens of any high-class racing stable, the common sense of their owners using them, however, only for the legitimate purpose of heavy draught.

In the minds of some people the only animal who is destined to occupy fitly any position into which he may thrust himself or be pushed by others is the two-legged beast, Man, who, being gifted with the power of uttering more or less articulate sounds, is thereby considered, by some of his own kind, to possess, spontaneously, an equiponderance of efficiency with every other member of his own species, no matter how different he may be from his fellows in hereditary instincts, training and experience.

The four queens of England, Mary, Elizabeth, Anne and Victoria, sprang from the same kingly race, storing in their veins, in varying proportions, doubtlessly, the blood of the Plantagenets, Tudors and Stuarts.

In different degrees also they were faced by problems essentially the same, although of course distinctively coloured by the atmosphere of the times.

The fame of Queen Mary and Queen Anne pales so much before the glory of their greater sisters, Elizabeth and Victoria, that, on this occasion, I shall make no further detailed reference to them, but, to complete the analogy, some description should be given of the characteristics and achievements of a princess who

lived equidistant between Elizabeth and Victoria, who in mental acquirements and personal appearance somewhat resembled the latter, and who, although she never sat upon the throne of any kingdom, yet founded the dynasty which now wears the imperial crown of this Empire, to the incalculable advantage, it should be added, of the myriad people who own its sway.

Each of these royal ladies produced, in one respect at least, exceptional effects upon the destiny of this country.

By the defeat of the Spaniard, Elizabeth freed England from the religious domination of Rome and secured the establishment of the English Church.

By her choice of ministers and her own exercise of patronage and authority, Victoria placed the balance of power in the hands of the middle classes, causing that tendency to public moderation and private respectability which naturally would flow from such a source of influence.

Some of that moderation and respectability may have died with her, but I think it will be universally conceded that, by the glamour which Victoria cast over the womanhood of her age, she paved the way for that female supremacy which now appears imminent—a threatened supremacy which occasionally causes those still imbued with early Victorian susceptibilities to wish that the modern feminine would, like her first parent, Eve, chiefly restrict her activities to apples and boa constrictors.

The Electress Sophia of Hanover, who spent her life in the age between Elizabeth and Victoria, and who was the direct ancestress of the latter, by her aspirations, tactful attributes and political attitude

brought about the obliteration of the House of Stuart and the triumph of the Hanoverian succession.

Although it cannot be said of this princess that she made any indelible mark upon the epoch in which she flourished, yet the other two, her predecessor and her successor, Elizabeth and Victoria, each by her personality impressed deeply the times in which she lived.

Marshal Foch is reported to have uttered a very pregnant sentence: "It was not an army which crossed the Alps; it was Hannibal," implying thereby that the one powerful individuality controlled the mass.

So it was the dominant personality of the great Queen Elizabeth which inspired the nation, spiritually engendering the Drakes, the Raleighs, the Hawkineses and those other fearless captains, who, regardless of all risk, took a positive pleasure in singeing the beard of the King of Spain and carrying the English ensign to the far ends of the world.

It was the genius of Elizabeth which inspired the Elizabethan age, the energy of the sovereign which permeated her subjects—indeed of her it may be said truly that she created her people.

Her policy was that of her ancestors—to reduce the power of the aristocracy, already shattered by the Wars of the Roses, to such a degree that it never again would threaten the prerogatives of the Crown; but her foresight carried her much farther.

She perceived that with the destruction of the monasteries and the impoverishment of the great baronial houses, the myriads of the poor who lived upon the bounty of the abbot or the feudal lord

would, for awhile, become destitute and, while making by parochial machinery some provision for their immediate subsistence, whilst establishing a new class of land occupiers who quickly became self-supporting and eventually opulent, she cultivated the good opinion of the public, openly proclaiming her desire to "speak as the common people do, but to think as the wise men do," an aphorism which, by the way, she culled from the composition of her celebrated tutor, Roger Ascham.

It is, of course, absurd to attempt any real comparison between the reigns of Elizabeth and Queen Victoria, the one at the end of the sixteenth century, the other in the middle of the nineteenth, but certain similarities existed in the social problems and conditions which faced both sovereigns, and it is instructive to see how these two great monarchs in many respects adopted the same course of action, although Elizabeth evolved the solution from her own wise foresight, and Victoria mainly achieved her ends through the ability of her political advisers. Yet the result was the same : the power of the aristocracy diminished, and the influence of the bulk of the people was enhanced.

In one direction, by a curious dispensation of Providence, Queen Elizabeth prepared the way for the ascent to the throne of the House of Guelph, at the time of their accession almost the most remote connections of the lineal heirs.

Probably from fear of physical complications—her own words tersely describe the situation : "asking nothing less than wishing her to dig her grave before she was dead"—Elizabeth strenuously resisted all

endeavours to coerce her into a marriage. How and by what means she indicated or nominated her successor to the crown is a matter of considerable controversy, but the fact is incontestable that by remaining the Virgin Queen she left the way clear for the accession to the throne of James Stuart and his descendants.

The eldest daughter of King James Stuart, First of England and Sixth of Scotland, Elizabeth Stuart by name, married Frederick the Elector Palatine, subsequently the ill-fated King of Bohemia. This unfortunate couple bore many children, and when Charles, Prince of Wales, afterwards King Charles I, became espoused to a French princess, Henriette Marie, a devoted Catholic, the Elector and his wife by their timely fecundity gained much popularity with the English Puritans, then first beginning to be organized as a powerful party in the State.

These fiery sectaries became alarmed at the French marriage, but built their hopes upon the fact that in default of male heirs, either Elizabeth, the Palatine princess herself, or her children would inherit the crown of England, "for God has already provided better for us in giving the Queen of Bohemia such a hopeful progeny brought up in the reformed religion, whereas the King's children, being brought up under a mother of the Romish persuasion, it was uncertain what religion they would follow."

These pious aspirations eventually came to pass, for Sophia, the twelfth child of Elizabeth and Frederick, consequently the grand-daughter of King James I, produced the dynasty which now fills the throne of Great Britain.



The Electress Sophia, as this lady is generally called in history, was not only the direct progenitrix of Queen Victoria, but both in appearance, and somewhat more in disposition and attainments, bore a marked resemblance to her royal descendant; the similarity would probably have become more evident but for the very diverse atmosphere in which they spent their lives.

The death, on November 6th, 1817, of the Princess Charlotte of Wales, the only child of King George IV, left the succession open to her uncle, William, Duke of Clarence, subsequently, in 1830, King William IV.

King William left no legitimate offspring living, consequently his little niece, Alexandrina Victoria, at that time eleven years old, having been born on May 24th, 1819, became the heir presumptive to the British Crown, practically, moreover, assured of the succession, the King being an old and worn man, while the little girl showed every sign of health and strength.

No such definite prospect cheered the soul of the Electress Sophia.

It is true that by an Act of Parliament—one of the most important statutes ever passed by the Legislature—the Act of Settlement, which became law in June, 1701, the Monarch of this Kingdom was compelled to join the Communion of the Church of England as by law established, and that the statute specifically named as next in succession to the Crown the Princess Sophia and the heirs of her body being Protestant.

But this honour, though truly magnificent in appearance, was distinctly less so in reality, the illustrious lady upon whom the crown devolved being

71 years of age. and only capable of obtaining the royal dignity if she contrived to survive the then existing occupant of the throne, one healthy heir at least, and an indefinite quantity of future aspirants born or unborn.

But Sophia possessed great determination and a wonderful constitution.

Born at the Hague on October 13th, 1630, the events of her earlier years proved a valuable education in the trials which beset the head that wears a crown, and especially the junior members of a royal house condemned to abdication and exile.

An anecdote is told of her early youth which demonstrates the persistency of her character.

The members of her family arranged the performance of a stage play, her two elder sisters being cast for the principal parts, but she, herself, omitted as of too tender years to undertake even the minor character. On the day of the performance, before it commenced, the determined little lady stood up in front of the audience and repeated the words of all the characters from beginning to end of the piece without any omission or mistake, concluding the recital with the individual remark, "I may as well tell you that I don't understand a single word of the thing."

This strength of character stood her in good stead in after years.

Whatever may be the verdict of history on William of Orange, his manifest greatness in some matters, his duplicity and treachery in others, this nation owes to him the establishment of the present dynasty on the throne of Great Britain.

To him Sophia was indebted for the distinction of being named first in the Act of Succession, but she was far too clear-sighted not to perceive that William pressed that measure forward neither for her personal advantage nor the benefit of the English nation, but solely for the purpose of his own political ends.

His hostility to all things French, his hatred of his magnificent opponent, *Le Roi Soleil*, Louis XIV, caused him to believe, probably sincerely and single-heartedly, that the safety of Germany and the provinces allied to her demanded the establishment of the Protestant succession on the throne of England.

Sophia was very proud of her tincture of English blood.

She once wrote to Lord Lexington, who had married a German lady, congratulating him on the birth of a son and heir, wishing the new arrival all good fortune — “because, you see, I am mongrel myself in the same fashion.”

Every line she writes on the subject of the succession demonstrates her sense of the importance of her claims, but, as aforesaid, her sagacity showed her the insecurity of her position, not so much from her own advanced age, as from the unreliable character of William of Orange.

In the event of her death the throne of England, by this enactment, would go to her eldest son, Georg Ludwig, who actually did succeed as King George I, the succession continuing to her grandson, George Augustus, afterwards George II.

Yet notwithstanding these definite and honourable undertakings, William of Orange actually made a proposal to the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg,

Frederick William. afterwards King of Prussia, to accompany him to England, take up his permanent residence in these islands, and strive to become habituated to the life and customs of the British people and parliament, with a view to assuming the place of heir to the throne in lieu of the Duke of Gloucester, son of Queen Anne, a child of weak and unhealthy disposition who soon after died.

This atmosphere of intrigue and uncertainty undoubtedly affected the character and behaviour of the Electress Sophia, causing her to display qualities of indiscretion and duplicity never at any time manifest in the nature of her descendant, Queen Victoria.

But in another direction Sophia lacked the wise assistance and co-operation which Victoria enjoyed in the most difficult portion of her reign.

By the publication of the letters and journals of Queen Victoria her subjects are in a position to appreciate the tact and ability with which the Prince Consort advised, and in some respects controlled his wife.

Sophia lacked any such helpmate, for her husband, Ernest Augustus, concentrated in himself all the idiosyncrasies which made the German noble of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries an example of those failings which animals possess, but wise men strive to avoid.

Instead of the decorous behaviour and studied moderation displayed by Prince Albert, Ernest Augustus, the husband of Sophia, exceeded in dissolute immorality even the profligate age in which he lived, being followed to an extent in his evil courses by the eldest son who succeeded him.

Sophia bore the infidelity of her husband with great equanimity.

It was hardly possible for her to do otherwise, the unique conditions of her courtship and marriage, as related in her own memoirs, having prepared her for an unconventional married life.

Perhaps that expression "unconventional" is not strictly accurate, for the conventional married life of those days entailed on the part of one at least of the partners to the contract a systematic and habitual breach of the seventh commandment.

Sophia in her youth first of all became affianced to Duke George William of Hanover, a genial, kindly, consistently immoral man, who is chiefly known to history by the fact that he became the father of a natural daughter, the ill-fated, ill-treated Sophia Dorothea of Zell, from whom are descended the royal and imperial families of England and Germany, as well as the murdered and defunct dynasty of Russia.

George William at the commencement of his amorous adventures fell deeply in love with the lively little Princess Sophia, and it is plain to all who have studied her life and letters that she in turn entertained the most affectionate regard for him until the end of her life. George William having visited Heidelberg, Sophia's home, and gained the heart and consent of the brown-haired girl and her parents, resumed his wanderings and departed for Venice. Here, knowing that the period of his bachelor freedom waxed shorter and shorter, he proceeded to indulge without restraint in all the illicit pleasures of that famed Italian city, then so much the home of extreme license as to cause a writer well versed in the ways

of the Rialto to declare that the inhabitants occupied one half of their time in performing acts which they spent the other half in praying God to forgive.

The natural result followed. George William repented of his matrimonial project, and, as Sophia herself calmly relates, "being perplexed how to find an honourable escape from his engagement, hit on the expedient of proposing to his younger brother, Ernest Augustus. that he, as his other self, should marry me and receive the family estates."

On the whole the experiment worked better than might be expected. Sophia made no objection; the penury of her parents during her early life blunted her susceptibilities, and as she sardonically observed, "a good establishment was all that I cared for, and that, if this was secured to me by the younger brother, the exchange would be to me a matter of indifference."

But she deserved a better partner. It is true that she quickly became acclimatized to her lot and learnt to shut her eyes to the patent faults of Ernest Augustus. Happily for her, wrapt in the glorious expectation of succeeding to the British Crown, her husband never in any degree became a practical factor in that problem.

Sophia's advanced age, over seventy, in the opinion of those British statesmen who used the exploitation of the Hanoverian succession as a manoeuvre in their own game of party politics, practically precluded her from any hope of ascending the British throne, consequently all political eyes were turned towards her rising son, a singularly cheerless luminary, Georg Ludwig, afterwards King George I.

In this aspect of Sophia's life a comparison necessarily arises with her descendant Queen Victoria.

The first difficulty which beset that young Princess arose concerning her marriage. Her uncle, Leopold, King of the Belgians, long entertained a hope that his niece would contract an alliance with some member of the House of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, one of those numerous princely families in Germany who were perpetuated for the purpose, as blood horses and cattle are reared nowadays, of maintaining a supply of eligible sires for the pedigree stock necessary for the purpose of maintaining the aforesaid exalted caste. Although in most cases deprived, at the time of the Revolution, of all their dominions, yet, so as in no way to interfere with their utility for breeding purposes, they were permitted to retain many of their sovereign rights, and by special guarantee of the Congress of Vienna were reckoned as "*ebenbürtig*"—qualified to contract equal marriages with members of royal houses.

King Leopold possessed great influence over the youthful queen, so much so that, having met Prince Albert and become attached to him, relying on her uncle's support, she took the whole management of her own courtship into her own hands, and concluded the business without consulting either the other members of her family or the Ministers of the Crown.

At the Privy Council called for the purpose of hearing the announcement of the proposed marriage of the Sovereign, the young Queen herself read the formal declaration, as Greville, the Clerk to the Council, relates—"in a clear, sonorous, sweet-toned voice, but her hands trembled so excessively that I

wonder she was able to read the paper which she held."

Some time before the meeting of the Council she met her relative the Duchess of Gloucester, and told her of the coming ordeal, whereupon the Duchess asked her if it would not be a very nervous thing to do.

"Yes," replied Queen Victoria, "but I did a much more nervous thing a little while ago."

"Why? what was that?" came the question.

"I proposed myself to Prince Albert," was the royal reply.

In the many difficult questions which arose during the course of these matrimonial negotiations constant similarities can be found between Victoria and both of her great predecessors.

The question of the rank and degree of the Prince Consort created much controversy, the Queen being desirous of giving her husband precedence over all the members of the Royal Family. The old Duke of Wellington, on the other hand, was determined that the Prince should rank after all the members of the reigning house, and the contest became so embittered that the Parliamentary Bill, necessary to give legal force to anything which might be arranged, eventually was withdrawn, and the Queen's husband was left without any specific place whatsoever assigned to him by Parliament, dependent alone upon any precedence his wife might choose to give him as an act of courtesy.

An even more important and embittered difference of opinion soon arose between the young monarch and her ministerial advisers.

A new Government came into office. Then, as



now, the lords and ladies-in-waiting changed with the ministers, so as to bring in personal contact with the sovereign those of the same political opinions as the ministers responsible for the administration of the State.

To this practice Queen Victoria strenuously objected. Her manner of expressing her dissatisfaction involves a very close comparison with that of her great predecessor, Elizabeth :

“ They want to deprive me of my Ladies, and I suppose they next will deprive me of my dressers and my housemaids. They wish to treat me like a girl, but I will show them that I am Queen of England.”

Nearly three hundred years before this episode, Elizabeth advanced a large sum of money towards equipping Sir Francis Drake for one of his numerous forays on the Spanish Main. Drake on this occasion showed no special haste to start the enterprise, and even less inclination to share his booty with his sovereign mistress. The epistle he received bore some resemblance to that written by Queen Victoria : “ Master Drake ; I gave you £10,000. What purpose have you wrought with it ? If you think to trick me in this matter, By God, you shall know there’s a Queen in England.”

Although neither in public nor in private correspondence did the Electress Sophia emulate the strength of language shown by her Tudor relation, yet she has her own distinctive style, which would hardly have met with the approbation of her direct descendant Victoria.

The age in which the Electress lived was gross, the domestic circle which she dominated was grosser,

and the venerable lady herself frequently uses, in ordinary correspondence, expressions which, if heard in the servants' hall of to-day, would wrinkle the brows and whiten the locks of those estimable ladies who preside over the Girls' Friendly Society or other kindred associations.

At all times Sophia possessed a very caustic tongue. Even the sacred person of an ambassador was not exempt from her stinging criticisms. Lord Winchelsea arrives on a very important diplomatic mission from Queen Anne: Sophia sums him up in the sentence: "He is a good creature, but neither a good politician nor a good dancer. He has need of a Master to rule both his feet and his head." Two members of the ambassadorial suite meet with the same curt criticism: "Monsieur Denge, he has eyes which please Madame von Kilmansegge (the Elector's favourite mistress) and teeth which displease the whole world," whilst an even more important person, my lord Scudamore, is summed up in the trenchant description: "By the benevolence of his family he has become very rich, and his money is the only thing which renders him estimable."

In one instance, however, the Electress's good sense did full justice to a famous Englishman: "Mr. Addison, I have found him not only a very good, but what is more extraordinary, a very modest poet."

Pungent and at times almost acrid, yet Sophia possessed much good sense, and on the whole a wide, liberal mind. To a degree she owed this to the mentor she adopted early in her married life, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz, a universal genius, who, being appointed librarian of the grand-ducal library at

Hanover. considered it part of his duty to mould, in every respect, the mind of his patron's wife, to invent an improved system of drainage for the mines in the Hartz Mountains, and to direct, so far as the generals would allow him, the operations of the Hanoverian army on the Rhine. Such an encyclopædic instructor required an equally omnivorous neophyte. And he found one in Sophia. Never did a learned Gamaliel have a more docile Paul for a studious footstool. A perusal of the correspondence between Leibnitz and the Electress is not only a liberal, it is a redundant education. Being a German professor, we may take it for granted that Leibnitz believed that he knew accurately every subject about which he talked. Being a woman of great social importance, one may feel equally sure that it mattered little to Sophia so long as she talked whether she knew anything about the subject or not. Her epistles roved from the right of succession to the English throne to the advisability of a reunion of all the churches of Christianity, diversified by dissertations on Lapland singing—apparently an art which did not exist, but which obviously could be discussed at length—to the advisability of administering an injection of the root of *ipecacuanha* when variations of temperature produced a disinclination for either gallantry or science. Under these circumstances Leibnitz declares that it is easier to talk about simples and drugs rather than about madrigals and sounds. Nevertheless he commenced his correspondence with a long funeral ode on the death of Duke John Frederic of Hanover, whom he describes as an incomparable Prince whom Death, envying the happiness of human beings,

promptly seized in its own cruel hands. Sophia in her memoirs, written in prose, tersely describes this grand-ducal personage as having departed this life "Like a good German, glass in hand"—a euphemistic, almost poetic way of saying that he drank himself to death.

An opinion has been advanced with some show of reason that a female sovereign rules her subjects with a greater regard for their welfare and less attention to her own private predilections than a male monarch. If this is so the reason is not far to seek. However strong-minded, however tyrannical at heart a woman may be, the instinct of her nature, not in times of trouble alone, is to feel the truth of the poet's words that "women like princes find few real friends." When the two disabilities are combined, when the woman becomes a reigning princess, she finds indeed the need of some strong nature to share with her the burden of rule. Elizabeth, Victoria, Sophia, all these discovered the male mind upon which in times of emergency they could rely. John Cecil, Lord Burleigh, served Elizabeth for forty years without intermission, and his tenure of office must have been one long act of self-obliteration. The Queen respected him and probably liked him. She paid him honours which she vouchsafed to none other. All who basked in her presence and conversation, all the young men who made pretence of personal attraction toward her, Essex, Raleigh, even the magnificent Leicester, did so on bended knee and with deep reverence. But she always bade her old minister sit in her presence, and treated him invariably with respect, and at times with generosity. He was exactly fitted for the task.

To quote Lord Macaulay: "What the haughty daughter of Henry needed was a moderate, cautious, flexible minister, skilled in the details of business, competent to advise, but not aspiring to command. And such a minister she found in Burleigh."

At that time across the Channel at the court of France another great statesman ruled, whose policy perhaps has had greater effect on the civilized world than any other European minister except Bismarck. Armand du Plessis, Cardinal Richelieu, grew to power in the latter years of Queen Elizabeth's reign. From different motives, and operating in a different direction, that wonderful man pursued the same political path as Elizabeth and Burleigh.

The great cardinal lavished his talents, risked his influence, even his life or liberty—for in those days when power departed it frequently only left the dour alternative of the block, the dagger or the Bastille—in the one immutable purpose, that of destroying the power, all-encircling on the Continent, of the Hapsburgs. To effect this design, although a loyal son and a prince of the Church Catholic, Apostolic and Romaine, as it loved to call itself, Richelieu tolerated and encouraged the Huguenots, and subsidized Gustavus Adolphus, the Protestant Lion of the North, to make armed campaigns into the dominions of the Hapsburg Emperor. He succeeded, and fixed a gulf between the Catholic and the Protestant churches which even to-day has divided Europe into two camps.

Burleigh struggled to the same end and lived to see the work of his great rival completed, in his own way helping towards the consummation.

But that work would never have been accomplished if the two ministers had changed places.

There was no room in the court of Elizabeth for a Richelieu. If he had served the Tudor princess he certainly before long would have lost his place and probably his head.

King Louis XIII. a curious mixture, like so many French monarchs. was at times suspicious of, at times antagonistic to his great minister, but he was never jealous. that quality being more of a feminine than a male attribute. Moreover, although Robert Cecil, Lord Burleigh's capable son, may have declared that Elizabeth was "occasionally more than a man, and in truth sometimes less than a woman," yet the feminine side predominated, and—a gruesome thought with which to regard the daughter of Henry VIII—as Pope declares :

"Oh woman ! woman ! when to ill thy mind  
Is bent, all hell contains no fouler fiend"—

when driven by her female vanity or arrogance she committed acts which sullied her glory and stained her sex.

A greater contrast to the old councillor who so steadfastly served Elizabeth through the spacious times of her long reign could not be found than the first minister who directed the political steps of Queen Victoria.

It is doubtful if a more incongruous pair can be imagined than the young girl suddenly called from obscurity to ascend the throne of a mighty nation, who had, it is true, been carefully educated for the brilliant destiny she was summoned to fill, but whose

surroundings otherwise were strict and highly decorous, and the lax, self-indulgent minister who obtained complete control over her, though himself tinged in a very pronounced degree with all the frailties which marked the fashionable man of the world at that period.

Melbourne in his way served Victoria as well as Burleigh ministered to Elizabeth. But the mistress treated the premier each in her own individual fashion. Elizabeth, as aforesaid, allowed Burleigh no political initiative, but made personal concessions to his age, permitting him to sit in her presence. Victoria, educated in the strict decorous *régime* of the early Victorian era, required rigid good manners in all who attended on her. Consequently when in her presence Lord Melbourne had to sit stiffly in a chair, although, as Greville relates, he was accustomed in the great houses of the rank and fashion to lounge and sprawl upon the couches and settees while he indulged in the piquant, coarse and licentious conversation which gave him much of his influence in society and Parliament. But he served his mistress with loyal devotion and with almost parental affection. He endeavoured to guide and form the immature intellect of one who, little more than a girl just emerged from the narrow precincts of the early nineteenth-century schoolroom, was suddenly placed in a sovereign position practically without anyone to control or authoritatively to counsel her. He did both, and did them so wisely that he was not only obeyed, but beloved and respected by the mistress he checked and guided. The fact that he personally had no strong political predilections, and probably

no political principles. made the task at that peculiar juncture all the easier for him.

Nothing better describes Lord Melbourne's habits and character than an anecdote related on reliable authority that after a Cabinet dinner—the usual procedure being that the chief ministers discussed their physical and intellectual food at the same time—Lord Melbourne, having with some demur consented that the Cabinet should approve a low fixed duty on wheat, when his colleagues had just left the room ran to the top of the staircase down which they were descending and called after them: "Here, I say, stop a bit. Is it to lower the price of corn or isn't it? It don't matter a damn which, but we must all say the same thing."

Yet of him, as of the other great political names with which the reign of Victoria is associated, it can be said, in the lines of her Poet Laureate, Lord Tennyson—

" And statesmen at her Council met  
Who knew the seasons when to take  
Occasions by the hand and make  
The bands of freedom wider yet."

During the Prince Consort's life she owed to her husband much wise counsel. Perhaps the greatest tribute to the wisdom, self-abnegation and moderation of Prince Albert can be found by comparing the bitter, almost virulent abuse which greeted him upon his marriage with the Queen, with the universal pæan of praise which now is accorded to his memory. But the political glories of the Victorian age were achieved after his death, and although it would neither be true



nor just to ascribe the greater part of these triumphs to only one other great minister, Lord Beaconsfield, yet the parallel with Lord Melbourne best lies with him, for he alone of her other premiers obtained a great personal ascendancy over her.

Benjamin Disraeli in all things was exotic. As his novels demonstrate, a rich vein of almost oriental magnificence runs through his imagination. To him, as indeed to many others not to be mentioned in the same breath as the author of 'Sybil,' a comparison naturally arose between Victoria, Queen Empress as he made her, and her renowned predecessor, Elizabeth, whom the great poet of her day described as "bearing two persons, the one of a most Royal Queen and Empress, the other a most virtuous and beautiful lady."

These lines of Edmund Spenser obviously awoke in the romantic mind of Benjamin Disraeli, full of ingrained literary predilections, an irresistible comparison, so in his ordinary correspondence he invariably refers to his sovereign as the "Faery." Probably this title in no way implied his own conception of the actual appearance of the Queen, who at that period of her life had, outwardly at least, shed most of the sylph-like attributes which marked her youth, but the romantic comparison with the Faery Queen was always in Disraeli's mind, and the affectionate regard which his monarch retained for him demonstrated the wisdom of his attachment. Yet even Disraeli bears witness to the Tudor attributes of Victoria. He once felt compelled to advise the Queen to alter her personal plans owing to a political emergency. He made the suggestion with fear and

trembling: "I fear when I stand before her at the Drawing Room I shall have a fearful frown." It fell out as he expected, and later he relates: "My head is still on my shoulders: the Great Lady has absolutely postponed her departure, but she averted her eyes from me—at least I fancied so—and I have no doubt I am not in favour."

The cloud, however, passed; the next day he writes: "My audience to-day, which was long, was all milk and honey."

The human race from the beginning has been subjected to many forms of government. The patriarchal and the autocratic were, perhaps, among the earliest; indeed from ancient records it is possible to believe that the one form of rule included the other. But from the very inception religious fear and worship always formed an ingredient in the dominant supremacy.

In the middle ages Europe became subject to the feudal system.

The ignorance, prejudice and obliquity of mental vision which strongly characterizes the so-called democracy of to-day, has erased from the minds of many the knowledge that the feudal system, in its conception, was the noblest form of administration which has ever been evolved since the foundation of Christianity—the inculcation of the sacred duty on the part of the strong and rich to protect and assist the weak and needy. The frailty of human nature triumphed over the precepts of chivalry, so, after a short period of chaos, the human race once more became the subjects of religious influence.

Each of the reigns of the four Queens of England was marked by a keen religious agitation.

Mary Tudor strove to replace in all its autocracy the domination of Roman Catholicism. She failed.

Her sister Elizabeth succeeded in establishing the English Church, an institution which her next female successor, Queen Anne, enriched and enlarged, perpetuating in the process her own memory by founding Queen Anne's Bounty.

Now in the twentieth century the potent influence of religious activity is on the wane, and for the first time in the history of the civilized world, a great and powerful country has instituted a declared anti-God campaign, and is taking measures to ensure that the rising generation shall be taught to despise and ignore the Divine conception.

Partly this is due to the fact that, ludicrous as it may sound, the concoctors of the Versailles Treaty, by carrying to extreme the policy which Richelieu initiated, and which unknowingly Queen Elizabeth and her right-hand man Burleigh supported, have imposed once more on Europe that worship of nationalism, which has supplanted the love of God by the so-called virtue of patriotism—an idolatry which, being interpreted into modern action, means not so much love of one's own country, as a fervent hatred of the nationality of everybody else.

The last thirteen years has seen the development of that theory to the verge of absurdity. Every tiny group which possesses racial characteristics of its own, no matter how little able to stand on its own foundation or keep its feet in the world's throng, has been given the absolute right of separate self-government, with the natural result that the world of to-day is almost in a state of political chaos.

To many thoughtful minds the only antidote to this evil is a wide and sincere revival of religious activity.

In the reigns of England's great queens, Elizabeth and Victoria, the efforts of the country they ruled so wisely and so firmly made a lasting impression on the history and the future of the world.

It may be that in years to come another queen will rule over these islands, and once more, by the mercy of Providence, secure the aid of another great minister. A new order of things may arise out of the present welter of confusion and, as has happened before, again the ancient domination of religion may emerge.

To paraphrase the eloquent words of Lord Macaulay, uttered nearly a hundred years ago: "Late events have not only affected territorial limits and practical institutions: the distribution of property, the composition and spirit of society has, throughout the greater part of Europe, undergone a complete change; yet," he concluded, "the unchangeable Church is still there."

If, into that word "Church," we read all the significance it is capable of including, we may still hope and believe with Robert Browning—

"God's in his heaven:  
All's right with the world."

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